

**A Comparison of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)
and
the North American Lutheran Church (NALC)
Denominations**

Report prepared by the ELCA/NALC Study Group

**Presented to Holy Trinity's Congregational Council
October 18, 2010**

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Introduction

The Holy Trinity Lutheran Church Congregational Council (“Council”) appointed a five-member study group to prepare a comprehensive comparison study of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (“ELCA”) and the North American Lutheran Church (“NALC”) denominations. This study group is called the ELCA/NALC Study Group. The study group members included Maynard Bridges, Annemarie Couture, Mick McMahan, Ray Sparks and Lee Stadther as Chairman. It is the study group’s understanding that the reporting from this study will be used as a resource for Council in discerning if the NALC as a viable alternative to the ELCA should Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Gastonia, NC decides to leave the ELCA.

Study Group Objective

The study group was to research and compare the ELCA with the newly formed, NALC denomination and then report back to the Council with their findings. The study group was provided with a Charter from Council that included an outline of what the study group was to accomplish. A copy of this Charter can be found on page 5 of this report.

The outline charged the study group to prepare a comprehensive comparison between the ELCA and NALC denominations, including; 1. Overall goals/purpose of each denomination, 2. Leadership structure 3. Call process, roster of qualified leaders, women in ministry, 4. Statement of faith: written statements and actual practice, 5. Connections within world Lutheranism, and 6. Health benefits for staff; pensions, survivor and disability insurance. Heather Neumann, Congregational Council President, communicated to the study group that the study was not limited to these items alone. The outline also charged the study group to list 5 strengths and 5 areas of concern of each denomination. Mrs. Neumann suggested that the study group may want to address strengths and areas of concern that directly affect Holy Trinity.

Process

Having a very brief timetable to accomplish these objectives, the study group met once a week for three weeks while working independently between scheduled meetings. Minutes were taken at each meeting as a written record of the meeting discussions and assignments. Copies of minutes from the three ELCA/NALC Study Group meetings are included in this report.

To develop a comprehensive comparison between the ELCA and NALC denominations, the study group took each of Council’s six topics and developed one broad question to address each of these topics. Then each broad question was then narrowed into smaller, more specific areas to be addressed within each broad topic question. This development enabled the study group’s response to be more thorough, better organized and easier to reference back to a specific topics related to each of the Council Charter’s six topics. The specific areas addressed are found under topic subheadings after each broad question. The committee felt there were a few other topics that needed to be included or repeated from the Task Force report on Alternative Congregation Affiliations (dated November 18, 2009), as a part of this reporting. These topics are addressed under the heading, “Other Congregational Matters”.

Once the study group determined the broad questions and the specific topics to research to address each of Council's topics from the Charter, our outline for the research and report was prepared. By our second meeting we were collaborating on the factual information to include in our reporting.

The researched information found in Section 1 of this report is factual to the best of the study group's knowledge and resources available. It was the study group's decision to provide only factual information in this section to allow the reader to form their own opinions of each denomination. It should also be noted that each piece of information reported in Section 1 is footnoted at the end of this report as to the resource used for that particular response. Please note that due to a brief timetable the study group had limited time to research each of these topics.

The study group's response to Sections 2 and 3 of the Charter, strengths and areas of concern of each denomination, is subjective and represents the compilation of ideas and opinions from the study group members. By the end of the group's second meeting and with the members prepared with their thoughts and notes, the study group was able to "brainstorm" on the whiteboard, a listing of strengths and areas of concern for each denomination. The study group thought it would be best not to limit the strengths and areas of concern to five. The study group felt that every strength or area of concern that is included in these two sections are areas that Council needs to consider when discerning Holy Trinity's future.

The study group's third and final meeting was to get each member's edit to Sections 1, 2 and 3 of the report. Every committee member has the opportunity to voice their opinion and agreed to the responses within this report. The study group did not respond to Section 4 of the Charter, "Present this information to the congregation in various venues, seeking to engage as many as possible.", as the group deemed it not necessary at this time. All study group members did agree to be available for any forums or other methods of presenting the finding within this report to the congregation, as Council so determines.

Report

Lastly, given that this issue, staying with the ELCA or leaving the ELCA and joining the NALC denomination, has honest and passionate disagreement, we want to ensure the readers of this report that all of the members of the ELCA/NALC Study Group had the opportunity to voice their personal opinions and that this document is a balanced report on which we all agreed to the content and submittal of this report to Council with our findings.

Respectfully submitted,

ELCA/NALC Study Group:

Maynard Bridges, Annemarie Couture, Mick McMahan, Ray Sparks and Lee Stadther, Chairman

ELCA/NALC Study Group Charter

The Council appoints the task force to accomplish the following:

1. Prepare a comprehensive comparison between ELCA and NALC including:
 - a. Overall goals/purpose of each denomination
 - b. Leadership structure
 - c. Call process, roster of qualified leaders, women in ministry
 - d. Statement of faith: written statements and actual practice
 - e. Connections within world Lutheranism
 - f. Health benefits for staff. Pensions. Survivor and disability insurance
2. Describe 5 strengths and 5 areas of concern of the ELCA.
3. Describe 5 strengths and 5 areas of concern of the NALC.

Possible areas to explore for items 2 and 3 above:

- world hunger ministries
- disaster response
- youth ministry support
- worship resources
- support for pastors and congregations by denominational staff
- seminaries and theological education
- interpretations of scripture
- political activism and lobbying in government
- decision-making process
- racial/ethnic quotas for participation in decision-making
- commitment to mission development
- social statements and teaching documents
- mission Support/Benevolence given to denomination and what it is used for
- helpful benefits provided to congregation
- communion practices (i.e. “open” or “closed” communion)

4. **Present this information to the congregation** in various venues, seeking to engage as many as possible.

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Section 1.

**Factual comparison of
the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)
with
the North American Lutheran Church (NALC)**

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What is the history of each denomination?

The **Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)** was officially formed in 1988 from the merger of three separate and well-established North American church bodies; the Lutheran Church in America, the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches and the American Lutheran Church.¹ Holy Trinity, Gastonia, NC has been in existence since 1899, was merged into the Lutheran Church in America in 1962 and then the ELCA in 1988 when the three denominations merged. Prior to 1962 Holy Trinity was a member of the United Lutheran church of America.²

The **North American Lutheran Church (NALC)** was born on August 27, 2010 from a vote at the annual Convocation of Lutheran CORE in Grove City, Ohio.³ More than 800 delegates of the Convocation, including 82 from North Carolina representing approximately 40 North Carolina congregations⁴, established the new Lutheran denomination, elected provisional leaders for one-year terms and adopted a provisional constitution. Those congregations and individuals who join the NALC during the initial year will elect their own leaders at the church body's first annual meeting next year. The NALC claims the formation of the new Lutheran denomination was in response to Confessing Lutherans asking for a church body that is faithful in its preaching and practices to the Holy Bible and to the teachings of the Lutheran Confessions.³⁰ The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's movement away from the authority of the Bible throughout the ELCA contributed to the formation of the NALC denomination.¹⁰

What is the size of the denominations?

(ELCA): As of December 31, 2009, the ELCA was made up of 10,348 congregations with membership at approximately 4.5 million. The ELCA Membership by Year statistics shows at the end of each year, from 2002 – 2009, that the ELCA is declining in both congregations and membership averaging 52 congregations and close to 70,000 members leaving annually.⁵

(NALC): On August 27, 2010, at the Convocation of Lutheran CORE, 18 founding congregations joined the NALC at its inception. New Jerusalem Lutheran Church, Hickory, NC was one of the original 18 congregations to join the NALC.⁴ Since this inception date, of just over a month ago, the NALC has grown substantially from the 18 founding congregations to 45 congregations that are members of the NALC or have passed a congregational vote indicating their intention to join the NALC (as of October 5, 2010). These 45 congregations have a total of approximately 16,900 baptized members. The NALC has been adding 4-5 congregations per week with a total of 3,000 baptized members since the founding convocation, and don't see any end to that in sight.⁶ Other NC churches joining the NALC are Grace Lutheran Church (Newton), Christiana Lutheran Church (Salisbury) and St. Matthew Lutheran Church (Salisbury).⁷

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What is the theological basis or perspective of each denomination? What does each denomination believe?

Confession of Faith

In both, the ELCA's and the NALC's, constitution their written Confession of Faith is identical except for the following; In section 2.02 c. the ELCA uses the words, God's Spirit and the NALC uses the words Holy Spirit. In section 2.03 the NALC adds to the end of this statement " , "according to which all doctrines should and must be judged." (Formula of Concord, Epitome, Part I)". And lastly, the NALC adds section 2.08 stating, "The NALC honors and accepts The Common Confession (2005), attached in an appendix hereto, as a summary of teachings otherwise affirmed in the Lutheran Confessions."⁸

The Confession of Faith found in Chapter 2 of each respective constitution essentially says that congregations that are members of each respective denomination confess the Holy Trinity, God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They confess that Jesus is Lord and Savior and that the Gospel has the power to bring salvation to those who believe. The members of the each respective denomination accept the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and believe that they are the inspired Word of God. They accept the Apostles', Nicene, and the Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of faith. They further assert that they accept the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true witness of the Gospel and they accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession. Members of each respective denomination accept the other confessions and writings in the Book of Concord and others such as the Small Catechism and the Large Catechism. And importantly, they accept the Gospel, recorded in the Holy Scripture and other confessions including the Lutheran confessional writings.⁹

The acceptance The Common Confession (Appendix A) is a major theological difference between the two denominations. The Common Confession is a seven-part statement of faith highlighting biblical and Confessional Lutheran doctrine written in 2005 by traditionalist Lutherans to address the particular theological concerns facing Lutherans in the 21st Century.¹⁰

(ELCA): The ELCA views the Lutheran Confessions as historical expressions of the faith held to be true at the time that they were written, but not necessarily as normative standards for teaching and practice today.¹¹

(NALC): The NALC is in agreement with traditional Lutheran teachings including the Common Confession.^{12/16}

Authority and Interpretation of Scripture

(ELCA): The ELCA states that they accept the authority of the Holy Scripture but has long viewed the Scripture from a contextual perspective. The synod places great validity in various scholarly methods of understanding the Bible and, as such, has long cast dispersions on the inerrancy of Scripture. The ELCA sees Scripture as evolving in the context of societal changes and influences and accepts the evolution of Scripture much like a member of the Supreme Court might view the US Constitution as a "living" document subject to change in interpretation based on evolving societal norms.⁹

(NALC): The NALC stands on the authority of the Holy Scripture and on a traditional interpretation of the Bible. The NALC believes and confesses that the Bible is God's revealed Word to us, spoken in Law and Gospel. The Bible is the final authority for us in all matters of our faith and life.¹²

Salvation

(ELCA): The ELCA’s view on salvation begins by laying out the historical foundation for thoughts on salvation and the “loopholes” created to address mentally handicapped, infants, those who have not heard the news, and those who do not believe. The ELCA acknowledges the exclusivity of Christ as the redeemer and that salvation is found through no other. Then they move on to argue the position that if Jesus is the Lord and Savior of all humanity and salvation comes only through Jesus Christ, then all will be saved by our Lord Jesus Christ no matter “whenever or wherever they lived or how religious or irreligious they are”.¹³

The “dig deeper” information on salvation wraps up by asking the question “Will all people be saved” and answers by stating “We do not...know the answer”. Throughout the article the case is made for universal salvation, but ends by stating that the true answer cannot be known by man. In essence, they are promoting universal salvation without coming out and just stating it. The article was written by Carl Braaten, a leading theologians and teachers in the Lutheran church for the past 50 years.¹³

(NALC): The NALC believes and confesses that all human beings are sinners, and that sinners are redeemed by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. God alone justifies human beings by faith in Christ—a faith that God creates through the message of the Gospel. As ambassadors for Christ, God uses us to speak His Word and build His kingdom.¹²

Teachings and Social Statements

(ELCA): ELCA social statements are theological and teaching documents. They assist the ELCA and its members to reach informed judgments on social issues from a perspective of faith. They are intended to cultivate individual and community deliberation as well as to guide moral formation. They govern this church's institutional policy in terms of its social witness and guide its work as a public church. Social statements are developed through an extensive process of deliberation involving the whole church and are adopted by a two-thirds majority of a Churchwide Assembly.¹⁴

(NALC): Members and congregations of the NALC have direct involvement in the decisions and life of the NALC. All teaching statements must be endorsed by the Bishop, approved by a two-thirds majority vote at a Convocation comprised of representatives from each NALC congregation, and ratified by two-thirds of NALC congregations.¹⁵

Ordination of Women

Both the ELCA and the NALC fully permit the ordination of women.^{9 and 16}

Ordination of Homosexual Persons

(ELCA): The ELCA has had a policy that permitted the ordination of homosexual persons who agreed to live in a wholly celibate life. At the 2009 national assembly, the ELCA agreed to permit homosexual persons who are living in monogamous relationships to apply for ordination. It will be up to local congregations to issue a call to such persons and to bishops to ordain them.⁹

(NALC): The assumption is the NALC will permit the ordination of homosexual persons who agreed to live in a wholly celibate life. The NALC constitution states, “The Executive Council shall define the standards of acceptance into and continuance in the ordained ministry of the NALC and ordained clergy shall preach and teach in accordance with the confession of faith of the NALC, shall lead lives befitting their holy office, and shall honor the standards established by the NALC for the office of Word and Sacrament.”¹⁶

View of Marriage

(ELCA): The ELCA’s current policy is that marriage is between a man and a woman; however, in the 2009 national assembly the ELCA approved a policy (not fully described) that allows individual congregations that choose to do so to recognize homosexual couples who agree to live in a monogamous relationship.⁹

(NALC): The NALC believes and confesses that the marriage of male and female is an institution created and blessed by God. From marriage, God forms families to serve as the building blocks of all human civilization and community. We teach and practice that sexual activity belongs exclusively within the Biblical boundaries of a faithful marriage between one man and one woman.¹²

Women in Leadership

Both the **ELCA** and the **NALC** encourage women in leadership roles within the Church.^{9 and 16}

Communion Practices

Both the **ELCA** and the **NALC** have open communion.⁹ The NALC constitution states, “The Church is the universal assembly of all believers among whom the Gospel is preached in its purity and the holy sacraments are administered according to the Gospel. (Augsburg Confession VII)”¹⁶

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What are each denomination's Mission and/or Purpose?

Mission and/or Purpose

(ELCA): The ELCA seeks to participate in God's mission in the world through the practice of the following:¹⁷

- a. Proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
- b. Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
- c. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity and justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, and standing with the poor and powerless and committing itself to their needs.
- d. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
- e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.
- f. Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.

(NALC): The NALC desires to be faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ in its worship of the Holy Trinity, one God in three persons, and to serve Christ in the world with a dynamic mission of Gospel outreach. The NALC will be a faithful and innovative Lutheran church body that spans national borders. It will hold at its heart the Great Commission of Jesus to “make disciples of all nations.” It will also serve the poor as our Lord commands and will be intentional in reaching out to meet human need. It will utilize networked ministries of local congregations and parachurch organizations. Already existing relief and service organizations, such as Lutheran World Relief and Lutheran Disaster Response, will be partners in the ministry of the NALC. The structure of the church must expedite, not hinder, the commission Christ has given to His Church.³⁰ It will be governed by a convocation of representative delegates from its congregations, and it will submit major decisions to congregational ratification. It will stand in continuity with the 2,000 year history of “the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church,” marrying the classical form of the church catholic with flexible structures appropriate for its ministry emphases. It will be ecumenically engaged and confessionally grounded.¹⁸

The NALC will be centered on four key attributes: Christ-Centered, Mission-Driven, Traditionally-Grounded and Congregationally-Focused:¹⁸

- a. Christ-Centered - We confess the apostolic faith in Jesus Christ according to the Holy Scriptures. We affirm the authority of the Scriptures as the authoritative source and norm, “according to which all doctrines should and must be judged” (Formula of Concord). We accept the ecumenical creeds and the Lutheran Confessions as true witnesses to the Word of God.
- b. Mission-Driven - We believe that the mission of the Church is to preach the Gospel and to make disciples for Christ. We believe that making disciples — in our congregations, in our communities and nations, and around the world — must be a priority of the Church in the present age.

- c. Traditionally-Grounded - We affirm the ecumenical creeds and the faithful witness of the Church across time and space. We endorse the form and practices of the universal Church that are consistent with Scripture, particularly the office of the ministry and the tradition of worship under Word and Sacrament. We seek dialogue and fellowship with other Lutheran churches and with faithful Christians of other confessions.
- d. Congregationally-Focused - We strive to be a church body that is organized to facilitate the ministries of local congregations in a posture of servant hood and a spirit of partnership, through the provision of resources, connections and information.

Resources Offered to Member Congregations

(ELCA): With the ELCA's national budget of \$95.4 million and the NC Synod's budget of \$5.4 million, the ELCA is able to offer a robust portfolio of services and resources. The ELCA has staff and other resources that are continually available to member congregations. The ELCA has seminaries for pastoral training and affiliated colleges and universities. The ELCA is highly structured and offers outreach programs that support virtually every area of congregational activity. The ELCA has a process for sanctioning and disciplining clergy and other staff as well as a call process that supports congregations when they are in need of a pastor. For details of the services and resources supported in the ELCA national and NC Synod please refer to their current year budget at each respective website.⁹

(NALC): Through using and sharing resources and mission opportunities, educational and youth materials and projects, establishing various forms of relationships with confessing Lutherans and other church bodies, and participating in clergy exchanges, the NALC will live out its vision of working beyond itself, while at the same time remaining in apostolic continuity with the Church universal, tracing its origin back to Jesus Christ's command to Peter the Apostle to "feed my sheep."³⁰ Beyond this statement and with the NALC being formed in August 2010, it is difficult to evaluate the resources that are being developed.⁹

What is the organizational and leadership structure of each denomination? How are decisions made at the denomination level what authority does the board have?

Organizational and Leadership Structure

(ELCA): The ELCA is a highly structured organization, with interdependent leadership through each of its three expressions—10,000 plus congregations, 65 synods across the US in nine geographic regions, and one churchwide organization. Each expression works together, under the guidance of the Churchwide Assembly and Church Council, to ensure a strong foundation of leadership that enables faithful proclamation of the gospel and expressive worship, community involvement, open dialogue and a culture of support for their nearly five million members.¹⁹ Three of the four elected officers of this church have offices at the churchwide organization.²⁰ The vice president is an elected lay member who serves as the chair of the Church Council.²⁰

(NALC): The NALC is very lean structurally, but there is enough structure to help congregations with their ministries. The NALC's focus is on assisting the ministry of congregations, not on congregations assisting the ministry of the national church body.¹⁵

In addition to a national Bishop, the other officers of the NALC shall be a General Secretary, Recording Secretary and a Treasurer. The General Secretary shall function as the chief operating officer of the NALC, managing its day-to-day administrative functions. The Recording Secretary shall assure that proper records are made and retained. The Treasurer shall be the chief financial officer of the NALC, overseeing the receiving and disbursing of all funds and keeping accurate accounts of all transactions. Further, the Treasurer shall make complete and accurate reports for review by all members of the NALC. The NALC will be empowered to hire pastoral, programmatic, and support staff as needed to carry out its mission.¹⁶

The NALC will also have an Executive Council consisting of the Bishop, four clergy and four lay members. The duties and function of the Executive Council will be to act as Board of Directors for the corporation of the NALC, establish policies and procedure to guide the Executive Council and staff, ensure financial integrity and, to the extent possible, solvency. The Executive Council will also ensure and approve long-range planning for the NALC to be presented at the annual convocation, prepare the proposed annual budget, including an estimate of the percentage of congregational income required to fund the budget, set salaries and provide for fiduciary oversight for the NALC, approve a proposed agenda and program for each convocation, issue letters of call under special jurisdiction, and for special service, in order to fulfill the obligations of the NALC, create and oversee committees and task forces appointed to assist the Executive Council in carrying out its duties as needed and report all actions to the next annual convocation.¹⁶

Congregations will form regional subdivisions or groups for mutual support of member congregations and to fulfill most effectively the ministry and mission of the NALC. Each regional group of congregations will adopt appropriate governing documents that are consistent with the governing documents and practice of the NALC. These regional groups will include an elected Dean, who shall be ordained ministers of the NALC, shall be accountable to the Bishop and shall support the work of the Bishop by conducting similar functions in their respective areas. Deans shall serve as pastor to pastors, their families, and congregations and will conduct a ministry of teaching and visitation with pastors and congregations. Deans may continue to serve under the call of a congregation.¹⁶

Accountability and Oversight

(ELCA): According to the ELCA constitution, they are one church body organized in three expressions -- each expression has its particular functions but all three together shares a common mission. Together, they ensure a strong foundation of leadership that enables faithful gathering and gospel proclamation, community involvement, open dialogue and a culture of support for their 4.5 million members.²⁰

Responsibility for synodical relations are exercised by the Office of the Presiding Bishop to coordinate the relationships between the churchwide organization and synods, develop and implement synodical and churchwide consultations and services, render support for synodical bishops and synodical staff, and provide staff services for the Conference of Bishops.²¹

Each of the ELCA's 65 synods elects a bishop and other officers. As the synod's pastor, the bishop oversees the ministry of other pastors and congregations. Together with his staff, the bishop provides support to congregations and leaders. This includes assistance in calling pastors and other staff to congregations; support in times of difficulty and congregational conflict; and, joining in the celebrations of congregations. Bishops also oversee the administration of the synod, supervising the work of other officers and staff.²²

(NALC): The Church is expressed primarily in the congregation but is also manifested in wider structures that serve the ministry of the local congregation. Oversight in the Church has been fundamental since New Testament times. The NALC will be served by a bishop, and by regional pastors who will be called deans.³⁰

The bishop, a title which means overseer, will provide oversight of the North American Lutheran Church. The deans will embody this oversight in a particular geographical region which may be established. Regional geographical units, intended to be small and local, may be formed to assist congregations in working together for mission. They will elect a dean who will serve as pastor to pastors, their families, and congregations and will emphasize teaching the faith and visitation with pastors and congregations. Deans may continue to serve under the call of a congregation. The deans will be accountable to the bishop, and support the work of the bishop by conducting similar functions in their respective geographical areas except that they will not be responsible for any disciplinary proceedings.³⁰

Contributions or Assessments to Support Organization

(ELCA): Each Fall every congregation in the NC Synod is sent a letter outlining their suggested mission support for the next year based on the mission support formula adopted at Synod Assembly. This request is derived from the information provided by the congregation in its annual report (number of confirmed, communing, contributing members) and from the congregation's giving history and other considerations. The 2010 and the 2011 mission support formula calculates a per capita dollar amount based on the size of the voting members in each congregation and this per capita dollar amount is multiplied by the number of voting members in each congregation. For 2011, the requests will be the same as 2010 due to the uncertainty created by reporting changes and the other economic realities facing the NC Synod.²³

Congregations can accept their formula request, discuss other options with the synod, or designate an amount over and above the amount asked in response to God's generous blessings. For every dollar of mission support shared with the North Carolina Synod, 59¢ goes to support our agencies and institutions, and synodical ministries here in North Carolina, and 41¢ goes to support our churchwide ministries in the ELCA.²³

The 2010 budget for the ELCA is \$95,000,000 including about \$5,000,000 to maintain a Washington, DC lobbying office.²⁴ Since 2002 “mission support” from the congregations of the ELCA has declined from \$71 million to \$51 million and since the August 2009 vote at the Churchwide Assembly, contributions to the ELCA have dropped by 15% so the budget has been cut dramatically.²⁵ Holy Trinity’s apportionment and benevolence “assessment” from the NC Synod office of the ELCA was \$59,000 in 2010. The request of apportionment and benevolence varies from year to year but Holy Trinity typically contributes 10% of their operating budget.²

(NALC): A budget for the operation of the NALC will be submitted to the convocation with an estimate of the percentage of congregational income needed to meet the budget. Bearing in mind this information, congregations will decide the level of financial support that they provide to the NALC and to other ministries. The budget for the NALC will include support for its partner ministries. Congregations also will be encouraged to support these and other mission and ministry efforts directly.³⁰

The total NALC budget for 2010 is \$500,000. It is anticipated that congregations will contribute proportionately to this national budget. In other words, 500 congregations would contribute \$1,000 each. The budget will increase, but the intention is to maintain a lean and flat organization and a minimal cost for the congregations of the NALC.⁴

Role of Bishop

(ELCA): The Presiding bishop of the ELCA is elected by the Churchwide Assembly. In addition to fulfilling such roles as preacher, teacher and administrator of the sacraments, which traditionally belong to the office of bishop, the presiding bishop of the ELCA serves as president and chief executive officer of the corporation and oversees the staff, budget, and overall administration of the church.²⁶

The presiding bishop chairs the biennial Churchwide Assembly and provides for the preparation of agendas for the assembly, the Church Council and its executive committee, the Conference of Bishops, and the Cabinet of Executives. The presiding bishop is also the chief ecumenical officer of this church, and provides leadership and care for the bishops of the synods.²⁶

Each of the 65 synods of the ELCA elects a bishop to serve as the synod's chief pastor and to exercise administrative oversight of the synod's work. In addition to their synodical responsibilities, the 65 synodical bishops join the Presiding Bishop and ELCA Secretary to form the Conference of Bishops. This 67-member group gathers at least twice each year for worship and study, mutual sharing and to conduct business. While primarily advisory (with the Church Council being the ELCA's board of directors), the role of the Conference of Bishops is significant within the life of this church. The conference has a particular role in matters related to rostered leaders, reviewing proposals from Vocation and Education before they are passed along to the Church Council for adoption. The conference advises the Presiding Bishop in matters related to churchwide planning and ecumenical relations.²⁷

(NALC): The NALC is led by a bishop, whose role is pastoral and theological rather than administrative.¹⁵ A General Secretary handles NALC administrative and operational functions.¹⁵ The Bishop shall be an ordained minister who is a member of the NALC. The Bishop shall serve as the chief pastor and chief evangelist of the NALC, responsible for ensuring the priority of the Great Commission in the life of the church.¹⁶

The Bishop shall carry out a pastoral ministry within the church, serving as pastor for the pastors and congregations of the NALC. The Bishop shall preach the Gospel, forgive sins, administer the Sacraments and judge doctrine. (Augsburg Confession XXVIII) The Bishop shall carry out a ministry of visitation throughout the church, will be a defender of the faith and will promote the mission of the church.¹⁶

The Bishop will, with the concurrence of the Executive Council, authorize all ordinations to the ministry of Word and Sacrament. The Bishop will normally conduct the rite of ordination. A candidate for the ministry may submit a request to the Bishop to appoint a particular pastor to preside at the ordination on behalf of the church, which shall be approved absent extraordinary circumstances.¹⁶ The bishop will also lead NALC inter-Lutheran and ecumenical dialogues.¹⁵

Terms of Office

(ELCA): The Presiding Bishop and officers of the ELCA, Vice President (a layperson to serve as chair of the Church Council), Secretary and Treasurer, are elected to serve a six-year term. The Bishop shall be eligible to serve a maximum of three consecutive terms. The Executive Council will be elected for four-year terms. No member of the Executive Council, except the Bishop, may serve more than two consecutive full terms.²⁸

Each of the 65 synods of the ELCA elects one bishop and three synod council officers for leadership, vision, and expertise. Synod Bishops are elected to six year terms and re-election may be limited by the synod's constitution. Terms and limitations for synod council officers are determined by the synod's constitution.²⁹

(NALC): The Bishop and officers of the NALC, a Recording Secretary and Treasurer, shall serve four-year terms. The Bishop shall be eligible to serve a maximum of three consecutive terms. The Executive Council will be elected for four-year terms. No member of the Executive Council, except the Bishop, may serve more than two consecutive full terms.¹⁶

Board Authority and Decision-Making Process

(ELCA): The ELCA consists of 10,000 plus congregations with about 4.5 million members.⁵ There are 65 synods that fold into one national entity. At the top of this structure are the Churchwide Assembly and the Church Council.⁹ The Churchwide Assembly, which meets every other year, is the highest legislative authority of the ELCA churchwide organization and deals with all matters which are necessary in pursuit of the purposes and functions of this church.²⁸ In the interim, the Church Council administers the synod. The Church Council operates like a corporate body with a board of directors and a chairman. The denomination has a Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions that provide detail governance of virtually all matters. In addition to the national synod (or Churchwide Assembly) there are 65 regional or statewide synods. Each of these synods operates in a similar fashion to the national synod with constitutions, bylaws and continuing resolutions, a council and various committees. Each synod is charged with various responsibilities including pastoral care for congregations, providing congregational resources, disciplining congregations and other duties.⁹

The regional and statewide synods must meet in assembly at least every other year, though the NC synod (which is part of Region 9) meets annually. These regional and statewide synods cannot take action on any matters that may conflict with the Churchwide Assembly or the national Church Council.⁹

(NALC): The NALC will meet in convocation annually or biennially. All the clergy on the roster and approximately an equal number of lay delegates, including at least one from every congregation, shall convene in a single representative decision-making body. Parishes of more than one congregation will be represented by their clergy and one lay delegate per congregation. Larger congregations will be represented by more than one lay delegate. The constitution indicates the formula of representation. Similar principles would apply to regional convocations, should such structures develop.³⁰

Whenever possible, actions of the convocation will speak for the church in an advisory fashion, expressing the mind of the convocation without binding individual congregations. Proposals that bind congregations in non-essentials must be accompanied by a statement of why such binding is necessary. In addition, such binding actions, as well as changes to specified sections of the NALC constitution and the adoption of teaching statements, must be approved both by the convocation and two-thirds of all congregations. The bishop with the regional pastors/deans and in consultation with the church's theologians will be responsible for submitting teaching statements and policies on church practice to the convocation.³⁰

The convocation will elect the bishop, secretary, and treasurer to serve for prescribed terms. All officers are eligible for re-election. The constitution will outline a nominating process. The offices of secretary and treasurer will be open to both clergy and laity.³⁰

An executive council will be empowered to make decisions for the NALC between convocations. The convocation will elect the members of the council. Committees will be formed as needed to do the work of the church. A Committee on Appeals, elected by the convocation, will be established to decide cases regarding the constitution and discipline of pastors and congregations. The church will be governed in a collegial spirit with the participation of clergy and laity.³⁰

Ratification of Decisions by Member Congregations

(ELCA): The ELCA constitution does not make any provision for the ratification of decisions made at the Churchwide Assembly. The ELCA's constitution states that for any matter for which adoption by a vote of two-thirds of those voting in a prior Churchwide Assembly was required by the constitution or bylaws of the ELCA shall require a two-thirds vote to be amended or repealed by a subsequent Churchwide Assembly and a social statement, which is developed by the appropriate churchwide unit and presented to the Churchwide Assembly as a proposed social statement of the ELCA, shall require for adoption a vote of two-thirds of those voting members present and voting in a Churchwide Assembly.²⁸

(NALC): The NALC will be governed by a convocation of representative delegates from its congregations, and major decisions will be submitted to congregations for ratification. Proposals that bind congregations in non-essentials must be accompanied by a statement of why such binding is necessary. In addition, such binding actions, as well as changes to specified sections of the NALC constitution and the adoption of teaching statements, must be approved both by the convocation and two-thirds of all congregations. There will also be a process of ratification by congregations of certain specified actions of the convocation.³⁰

Congregational Delegates from Congregations at Conventions

(ELCA): For the Churchwide Assembly, each synod elects one voting member for every 5,800 baptized members in the synod. In addition, each synod elects one voting member for every 50 congregations in the synod. The synodical bishop, who is *ex officio* a member of the Churchwide Assembly, shall be included in the number of voting members so determined. There shall be at least two voting members from each synod.²⁸

For the NC Synod Assembly, each congregation elects lay members based on a Synod Council formula and the number of baptized members in the congregation. The Synod Council desires the lay representation from each congregation to be, as nearly as possible, 50 percent female and 50 percent male. In addition, all ordained ministers, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers on the rosters of this synod, in attendance at this Synod Assembly, shall be voting members of the Synod Assembly. The officers of the synod shall be included voting members of the Synod Assembly.³¹

(NALC): Delegates with voting privileges at a convocation shall be the ordained ministers of the NALC and at least an equal number of laypersons. Each congregation of the NALC shall elect one lay delegate to the convocation for every 750 baptized members, or fraction thereof, of such congregation. In the event that the total number of lay delegates elected pursuant to the preceding sentence is less than the total number of ordained clergy, the Executive Council shall apportion additional lay delegates based on the relative size of the congregations of the NALC.¹⁶

How does each denomination partner with Lutherans around the world?

Partnership with Lutherans Around the World

(ELCA): The ELCA's three expressions (Churchwide Organization, Synods, and Congregations), together with affiliated agencies and institutions, are all part of the ELCA, enjoying a strong presence at the local, regional and continental levels. And because of their connections with worldwide Lutheran, ecumenical and interfaith partners, the ELCA is an active participant in the global community.¹⁹

(NALC): The NALC is committed to working in partnership with faithful Lutherans in other parts of the world. The NALC will also encourage congregations to enter into partnership relationships with other congregations in North America and around the world and will help to facilitate those relationships.¹⁵

The new church body intends to encompass congregations in Canada, the United States, Mexico and the Caribbean. It will stand as a partner with confessing church bodies throughout the world.³⁰

Engaged in Ecumenical Relationships

(ELCA): The ELCA nurtures important connections with Lutheran, ecumenical and interfaith partner and related organizations. This church also works in faith alongside 26 colleges and universities related to the ELCA, eight seminaries, and over 2,000 schools and early childhood education centers. The ELCA also expresses their faith through many campus ministries, outdoor ministries, and social service agencies across the country.¹⁹

The ELCA and its Bishop are active members and supporters of the World Council of Churches.³²

(NALC): The NALC will engage in ecumenical dialogue with other churches. Congregations and regions are encouraged to engage in such relationships and conversation. The new church body will encourage new forms of ecumenical dialogue.³⁰

The NALC will seek to establish close relationships for shared ministry with other Lutheran churches, including interchangeability of clergy. Additionally, it will maintain forms of support and community with those ELCA congregations and individuals who are members of Lutheran CORE.³⁰

The NALC will apply for membership in the Lutheran World Federation, but will not apply for membership in the National Council of Churches or the World Council of Churches. It will be open to cooperating in the establishment of new national and worldwide ecumenical organizations.³⁰

The NALC will encourage the formation of associations and affinity groups such that its members can pursue particular shared ministry objectives. The NALC will be a member of Lutheran CORE and will covenant with it in missions, theological education, and other areas to be determined by Lutheran CORE and the NALC.³⁰

Benevolence Giving from Member Congregations

(ELCA): Each fall every congregation in the NC Synod is sent a letter outlining their suggested mission support for the next year based on the mission support formula adopted at Synod Assembly. Congregations can accept their formula request, discuss other options with the synod, or designate an amount over and above the amount asked in response to God's generous blessings.²³

Holy Trinity's apportionment and benevolence "assessment" for the statewide and national offices of the ELCA was \$59,000 in 2010.² For every dollar of mission support sent to the North Carolina Synod, 59¢ goes to support our agencies and institutions, and synodical ministries here in North Carolina, and 41¢ goes to support our churchwide ministries in the ELCA.²³ Of the 59% that stays with the NC Synod; approximately 12.5% goes to institutions in NC (L-R University, Lutheridge + Lutherock, Lutheran Family Services, Agape + Kure Beach, Lutheran Services for the Aging, Southern Seminary, etc.), .75% (<1%) to congregational ministries, and 4.6% to Outreach and Global Missions.³³ Of the 41% that goes to the national office; approximately 80% is used for mission ministries. The ELCA describes "Mission" as a broad term used to describe all the ministries of the church, not just those relating to missionaries. "Support" is describe as the financial backing that covers the costs of delivering these ministries (including administrative costs, materials and more) here and abroad. Supporting our missionaries through the Global Mission program unit is an example of one of the many ways mission support enables us to do God's work with our hands.³⁴

(NALC): Congregations decide which ministries to support with their benevolence giving. The NALC will not receive funds from its member churches and re-distribute them to various entities. The NALC will help congregations find the best ways to support Christ's mission in the world. NALC congregations are encouraged to support ministries and mission congregations directly. The NALC needs direct support, especially during its formative years, but ongoing administrative costs will be limited because of the NALC's commitment to a lean structure.¹⁵ Two of the many world-wide collaborative ministries of Lutheran denominations are Lutheran World Relief and Lutheran Disaster Response.³⁵

What is the Call Process for each denomination and how will new pastors be trained?

Call Process

(ELCA): The authority to call a pastor in the ELCA resides at the congregation level. Pastors are called by local churches by a two-thirds majority in a written ballot according to the Holy Trinity Constitution and the model Constitution of the ELCA. Only “rostered” clergy who are recommended by the synodical bishop may be called to an ELCA congregation. To be rostered a pastor must apply to a synod and go through a process of written and face-to-face evaluation by the bishop and appointed clergy and lay persons. This is a rigorous process that ensures that pastors are well qualified in terms of spiritual, moral, ethical and education standards.⁹

(NALC): The NALC will support its member congregations in the call process through a ministry of oversight and mutual accountability.³⁰ The NALC will certify and maintain a clergy roster and will establish procedures for the reception of clergy from other Lutheran church bodies. Congregations may call any pastor who is on the roster of the NALC. Working with the bishop, regional pastors/deans, and WordAlone’s Clergy Connect service, the NALC will provide a roster of eligible clergy, assist in the calling process, and provide for ordination and installation of pastors.³⁰

The NALC will certify and maintain lists of chaplains and interim pastors, and will seek qualification as an endorsing agent for military chaplains. The church will welcome the ministries of those currently serving as Associates in Ministry, Deaconesses and Diaconal Ministers, and will explore the possible creation of a single structure of commissioned lay ministry.³⁰

Theological Education

(ELCA): The ELCA has eight seminaries providing high quality theological education which is both deeply Lutheran and profoundly ecumenical. The seminaries provide for education and training for ELCA pastoral candidates. ELCA seminaries cooperate with one another and with ecumenical partners to enrich educational offerings and opportunities for dialogue. Candidates for ordained ministry in the ELCA are required to attend an ELCA seminary for at least one year.³⁶

(NALC): As a new denomination the NALC has no seminaries. The NALC will establish a standing task force on theological education. It shall be the prayerful goal of the NALC that seminary education for prospective ordinands, as much as possible, be made available through funds provided by members of the NALC.¹⁶

Theological education for laity and clergy will be a priority for the NALC. Providing teaching for all the baptized is essential if they are to live as disciples, following the commands of the Lord Jesus (Matthew 28:19-20). A basic knowledge of the Lord’s Prayer, the ecumenical creeds, and the Ten Commandments grounds all Christians in the essential narrative of Holy Scripture and in the tradition of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. The NALC will provide guidance for initiation in the Christian faith as well as for ongoing learning that supports that faith and life.³⁰

In addition, the formation of clergy, through both initial confessional training such as is received in seminary and ongoing systematic study, will be established and criteria for such will be set forth. Such education has as its goal the establishment and support of a parish practice that is centered in the Word and the Sacraments.³⁰ The NALC is working on this and has assigned a work group to develop strategies in the implementation of this priority, and will work with existing Lutheran and non-Lutheran seminaries and with newer theological education initiatives such as the Institute of Lutheran Theology.³⁰ It is anticipated that most pastors coming to the NALC will be coming from the ELCA and thus this is an issue of long-term importance, but not a critical matter at this time.⁴

Dual Rostered Pastors and Congregations

(ELCA): ELCA bylaw 8.72.d. expressly prohibits an ordained minister of the ELCA from serving on the roster of another church body. To do so would also violate, explicitly and implicitly, other provisions in the governing documents and policies of the church. With respect to congregations, amendments to the ELCA constitution in 1999 authorized one type of dual rostering in the context of federated congregations. The absence of other provisions authorizing dual rostering in other circumstances indicates that such practice is not authorized. Within the ELCA, the responsibility for determining if a congregation meets its constitutional responsibilities is allocated to the synod.³⁷

(NALC): Ordained clergy of the NALC and congregations may be members of congregations of other Lutheran church bodies, provided that the confession of faith and practice of such congregations are compatible with the NALC, as determined by the Executive Council.¹⁶

Disciplinary Process for Pastors and Congregations

(ELCA): An entire chapter of the national ELCA constitution, Chapter 20, is devoted to disciplinary process and procedures. This chapter, in great detail from pages 158 to 181, describes the step-by-step process for disciplining pastors, staff and congregations and includes court-like procedures for appealing disciplinary rulings. Clearly, the structure of the ELCA lends itself to the provision of just and thorough review of disciplinary matters from both the perspective of the church or synod and that of the person or entity that has been accused of wrong-doing.⁹

(NALC): The NALC will support its member congregations in the disciplinary process through a ministry of oversight and mutual accountability. The NALC will also provide a process for discipline of its pastors and congregations, working through the bishop, regional pastors/deans, and in conjunction with a Committee on Appeals.³⁰

Ordination of Women

Both the ELCA and the NALC fully permit the ordination of women.^{9 and 16}

Are there acceptable benefit programs available for staff and pastors including retirement plans and health and life insurance with each denomination?

(ELCA): The ELCA provides a full and extensive portfolio of employee benefits offered through the ELCA Board of Pensions. These employee benefits include a 401(k) retirement plan and health, dental, disability and life insurance plans. These benefits are provided for all eligible staff at Holy Trinity.⁹

(NALC): The NALC has made a start in developing a benefits packages and providers for pastor and staff benefits; however, former ELCA pastors and staff with five years of service are eligible to remain in the ELCA employee benefit plans offered through the ELCA Board of Pensions. A representative of the ELCA Board of Pensions attended the NALC convocation and confirmed that pastors in the NALC would continue to be welcomed to participate in the retirement and health insurance benefits available now through the ELCA Board of Pensions. With the NALC, Holy Trinity's eligible staff would be able to retain their current benefit packages.⁴

Other Congregational Matters

Rules regarding Church Property

(ELCA): Holy Trinity's current constitution describes the status of church property in Chapter 7, sections 7.01, 7.02, 7.03, and 7.04. Our constitution states that if the congregation ceases to exist, all property reverts to the NC Synod of the ELCA. If the congregation is removed from membership of the ELCA for disciplinary purposes the property remains with the congregation. If the congregation transfers to another Lutheran church body, title to all property remains with the congregation. If the congregation becomes an independent congregation or joins a non-Lutheran denomination, with the consent of the NC Synod Council, the title to the property remains with the congregation. After consultation, the NC Synod Council could require the property to remain with any members who want to stay in the ELCA.⁹

(NALC): Congregations of the NALC will own their buildings and property and, if they depart from the NALC, retain ownership.³⁰

Process for Joining a Denomination

(ELCA): Since Holy Trinity is currently a member of the ELCA this is not applicable.

(NALC): Congregations will become members of the NALC according to the requirements of their congregational constitutions, by accepting the confession of faith and constitution of the NALC.³⁰ To join the NALC, a congregation must subscribe to the NALC constitution. Congregations vote according to the procedures specified in their own constitutions and bylaws, not procedures mandated by the NALC.¹⁶

Process to Terminate a Relationship with a Denomination

(ELCA): The process for leaving the ELCA is found in Section C6.05 of the Holy Trinity Constitution. The congregation is required to hold a meeting for the purpose of voting on leaving the ELCA. Two-thirds of those attending this meeting must vote in favor of terminating Holy Trinity's relationship with the ELCA. Within ten days of the vote the Secretary of the Church Council must notify, the Bishop of the NC Synod, of the outcome of the vote. The Bishop "shall" consult with the congregation within 90 days of notification. Following the visit from the Bishop or at least 90 days from the first vote, the congregation is required to conduct a second vote. Once again, two-thirds of the members attending this meeting must vote to leave the ELCA. A certified copy of the outcome is then mailed to the Bishop. One additional step is then necessary. Since Holy Trinity was formerly a member of the Lutheran Church in America synodical approval is necessary before terminating membership in the ELCA.⁹

(NALC): Congregations may terminate their relationship with the NALC by the process specified in their own congregational constitutions without any requirement for consent by the NALC.³⁰

Appendix A

The Common Confession (2005)

1. The Lord Jesus Christ

We are people who believe and confess our faith in the Triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We trust and believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord.

2. The Gospel of Salvation

We believe and confess that all human beings are sinners, and that sinners are redeemed by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. God alone justifies human beings by faith in Christ—a faith that God creates through the message of the Gospel. As ambassadors for Christ, God uses us to speak His Word and build His kingdom.

3. The Authority of Scripture

We believe and confess that the Bible is God's revealed Word to us, spoken in Law and Gospel. The Bible is the final authority for us in all matters of our faith and life.

4. A Common Confession of Faith

We accept and uphold that the Lutheran Confessions reliably guide us as faithful interpretations of Scripture, and that we share a unity and fellowship in faith with others among whom the Gospel of Jesus Christ is preached and the sacraments are administered in accordance with the Gospel.

5. The Priesthood of All Believers

We believe and confess that the Holy Spirit makes all who believe in Jesus Christ to be priests for service to others in Jesus' name, and that God desires to make use of the spiritual gifts he has given through the priesthood of all believers.

6. Marriage and Family

We believe and confess that the marriage of male and female is an institution created and blessed by God. From marriage, God forms families to serve as the building blocks of all human civilization and community. We teach and practice that sexual activity belongs exclusively within the Biblical boundaries of a faithful marriage between one man and one woman.

7. The Mission and Ministry of the Congregation

We believe and confess that the church is the assembly of believers called and gathered by God around Word and Sacrament, and that the mission and ministry of the church is carried out within the context of individual congregations, which are able to work together locally and globally.

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Section 2.

Strengths and Areas of Concern of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

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Strengths of the ELCA

Strength: Resources to Member Congregations. The ELCA (national and NC Synod) is able to offer a robust portfolio of services and resources. The ELCA has both national and local staff and other resources that are continually available to member congregations. The ELCA has seminaries for pastoral training and affiliated colleges and universities. The NC Synod is blessed with two outstanding outdoor ministry partnering agencies in North Carolina. Each agency, Agapé † Kure Beach Ministries and Lutheridge + Lutherock Ministries, Inc, have two retreat or camp locations. The mission of these two agencies is to provide opportunities where all people can experience a Christ-centered group or community. Both ministries are partially supported by synod mission support funding. The ELCA is highly structured and offers outreach programs that support virtually every area of congregational activity. The ELCA has a process for sanctioning and disciplining clergy and other staff as well as a call process that supports congregations when they are in need of a pastor.

Strength: Pastoral Training. The ELCA has extensive pastoral and lay leader training facilities and processes including eight seminaries and many colleges for recruiting, vetting and mentoring pastoral candidates. ELCA seminaries cooperate with one another and with ecumenical partners to enrich educational offerings and opportunities for dialogue. Candidates for ordained ministry in the ELCA are required to attend an ELCA seminary for at least one year.

Strength: Established Institution and Structure. The ELCA, along with the NC Synod, are very established and highly structured organizations, with interdependent leadership through congregations, synods, and one churchwide organization. The ELCA was made up of approximately 10,000 congregations with membership around 4.5 million. The ELCA denomination has been able to establish and support a robust portfolio of services and resources. These services and resources include processes to call pastors, support congregations with interim pastors, resolve and support congregations with conflicts, and provide oversight and discipline of pastors and congregations when needed. The ELCA has seminaries (Southern Seminary, Columbia, SC), affiliated colleges and universities (Lenoir-Rhyne University, Hickory, NC), and over 2,000 schools and early childhood education centers. The ELCA has outreach programs that support virtually every area of congregational activity. The ELCA has affiliated agencies and institutions with a strong presence at the local (Lutheran Family Services, Lutheran Services for the Aging and Lutheran retirement facilities), regional and continental levels (Lutheran World Hunger and missionary support). The ELCA also expresses their faith through many campus ministries, outdoor ministries, and social service agencies across the country.

Strength: Calling Pastors. In the ELCA, the synodical bishop is aware of pastors who are available for call and assigns candidates to a church that is seeking a pastor for interview. Only “rostered” clergy who are recommended by the synodical bishop may be called to an ELCA congregation. To be rostered a pastor must apply to a synod and go through a process of written and face-to-face evaluation by the bishop and appointed clergy and laypersons. This is a rigorous process that ensures that pastors are well qualified in term of spiritual, moral, ethical and education standards. **Supply Pastors.** In the ELCA, the synodical bishop is aware of pastors who are available for an interim or temporary call while a church seeks a permanent pastor.

Strength: Mission Outreach. The ELCA has a system for supporting affiliated agencies and institutions with a strong presence at the local, regional and continental levels. These worthwhile organizations include Lutheran Family Services, Lutheran Services for the Aging, Lutheran retirement facilities, Lutheran World Relief and Lutheran Services for the Aging, Lutheran World Hunger, missionary support and many other established organizations that do much good throughout the world. The ELCA is involved in many worldwide collaborative ministries with other Lutheran denominations; like Lutheran World Relief and Lutheran Disaster Response.

Strength: Conflict Resolution. The ELCA synodical bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council are available to give counsel when disputes arise within the synod. The Bishop and Council are to receive expressions of concern from ordained ministers, associates in ministry, or other persons on the official lay rosters of this church, congregations, and organizations within the synod; provide a forum in which the parties concerned can seek to work out matters causing distress or conflict; and make appropriate recommendations for their resolution. When the matter at issue cannot be resolved in this manner, prescribed procedures for investigation, decision, appeal, and adjudication shall be followed as set forth in the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Strength: Employee Benefit Plans. The ELCA provides a full and extensive portfolio of employee benefit plans (Health, Retirement, Disability and Survivor) offered through the ELCA Board of Pensions. Any congregation that was a part of the ELCA in 2005 and later leaves the ELCA can continue to provide their pastors and staff with employee benefit plans offered through the ELCA Board of Pensions.

Areas of Concern of the ELCA

Concern: Evolving Theology. The ELCA places great validity in various scholarly methods of understanding the Bible and, as such, has long cast dispersions on the inerrancy of Scripture. The ELCA sees Scripture as evolving in the context of societal changes and influences and accepts the evolution of Scripture. Views the Lutheran Confessions as historical expressions of the faith held to be true at the time that they were written, but not necessarily as normative standards for teaching and practice today. The theology of the ELCA is out of step with a traditional interpretation of scripture.

Concern: Flawed Governing Process. The ELCA has a flawed governing process. Representation at the bi-annual Churchwide Assembly is provided through a representative structure that allows approximately 1,000 delegates to set policy for more than 4,000,000 members. Actually, ordained “local” pastors have less influence than lay persons at the Churchwide Assembly. Of those voting at the August 2009 Churchwide Assembly, 40% were ordained pastors and 60% were lay delegates. Of the ordained pastors who voted in August 2009, 40% were female, giving female pastors more voting influence than their numbers would imply. In NC there are 36 female pastors out of more than 300 active and 145 retired pastors (242 congregations). The percentage of female pastors relative to the total number of pastors in NC is far less than ten percent. Nationally this percentage is a little under 20% female. According to the Pew Research Foundation, just 37% of ELCA pastors supported the changes in ELCA policy made in 2009. Had 63% of the pastors attending the Churchwide Assembly voted against the measures, they would not have passed. This is one of the many examples of how the ELCA governing process is flawed. **No Ratification of Decisions.** The ELCA Churchwide Assembly decisions and policies that are voted on by approximately 1,000 delegates are not required to submit to congregations for ratification. There is no process in the ELCA of ratification by congregations on changes to the ELCA constitution, the adoption of teaching statements, or of any actions, decisions, and policies approved by the Churchwide Assembly.

Concern: In Conflict and Lacks Unity. The ELCA is in conflict with its local congregations with large numbers of members upset with the direction that the national synod has taken. The ELCA Membership by Year statistics shows at the end of each year, from 2002 – 2009, that the ELCA is declining in both congregations and membership averaging 52 congregations and close to 70,000 members leaving annually. Congregations in the ELCA are not unified. Congregations are opposed to the decisions and change the ELCA denomination has been making. Some of these congregations are leaving the denomination and some are submitting statements of opposition.

Concern: Political. The ELCA is political and takes liberal positions on many issues. Please refer to the ELCA social statements for a listing of these social issues and the church’s stance. These statements are political, as opposed to theological, positions. The ultimate political statement is the most recent Social Statement on Human Sexuality, which advocates that homosexual persons who are in monogamous relationships with persons of the same sex may be ordained.

Concern: Lobbying Office. The ELCA financially supports a political lobbying or advocacy office in DC and in 21 U.S. states, including NC. The ELCA Washington Office fulfills the ELCA's witness for social justice on domestic and foreign policy issues facing the nation, and through it, the world. The State Public Policy Advocacy Offices represent the church in advocating at the state government level with and on behalf of those without economic or political power. In the ELCA's first social statement, "The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective" 1991, the church commits itself to *work with and on behalf of the poor, the powerless, and those who suffer, using its power and influence with political and economic decision-making bodies to develop and advocate policies that seek to advance justice, peace, and the care of creation.* The advocacy office takes position consistent with ELCA social policy language and with reference to this church's membership in ecumenical and international bodies.

Concern: High Structure and Overhead Costs. The ELCA is a highly structured organization, with interdependent leadership in 10,000 plus congregations, 65 synods in nine, U.S. geographic regions, and one churchwide organization. These entities work together, under the guidance of the Churchwide Assembly and Church Council, to ensure a strong foundation of leadership that enables faithful proclamation of the gospel and expressive worship, community involvement, open dialogue and a culture of support for their nearly five million members. The ELCA is a "top-down" organization. In this regard, congregations at best are considered on equal footing with the national and statewide synods and other Lutheran entities. Congregations serve the statewide and national synods, rather than the other way around. The ELCA is a bureaucratic entity with millions of dollars spent on salaries for staff developing social policy language and paying for advocacy of these social issues.

Concern: Financial Support. The 2010 budget for the ELCA is \$95,000,000. Each year, every congregation is sent a letter, from their synod office, outlining their suggested mission support for the next year. This request is derived from a formula that calculates a per capita dollar amount based on the size of the voting members in each congregation and this per capita dollar amount is multiplied by the number of voting members in each congregation. Congregations can accept their formula request, discuss other options with the synod, or designate an amount over and above the amount asked in response to God's generous blessings. For every dollar of mission support shared with the North Carolina Synod, 59¢ goes to support our agencies and institutions, and synodical ministries here in North Carolina, and 41¢ goes to support our churchwide ministries in the ELCA. The financial support required to support an organizational structure the size of the ELCA is huge.

Section 3.

Strengths and Areas of Concern of the North American Lutheran Church (NALC)

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Strengths of the NALC

Strength: Traditional Theology. The NALC stands on the authority of the Holy Scripture and on a traditional interpretation of the Bible. NALC believes and confesses that the Bible is God's revealed Word to us, spoken in Law and Gospel. The Bible is the final authority for us in all matters of our faith and life. The NALC denomination believes and confesses that all human beings are sinners, and that sinners are redeemed by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Salvation comes through God's grace. This means that the NALC accepts a historic and traditional interpretation of Holy Scriptures, affirming the authoritative source and norm, "according to which all doctrines should and must be judged". (Formula of Concord) The theological basis of the NALC is that salvation comes through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ and only through Christ.

Strength: Congregation Based. The NALC is organized like other Lutheran denominations with a national bishop. Rather than sub-dividing further into statewide synods, the NALC uses Regional Deans to assist the bishop. Regional Deans may also be serving congregations full time as Lutheran pastors. Each congregation of the NALC has at least two representatives at the annual convocation. (Congregations larger than 750 members are apportioned additional delegates.) Congregations appoint their representatives, usually the senior pastor and one lay delegate. The national convocation must have at least one lay delegate for each ordained delegate. Changes in the constitution or "teaching statements" must be ratified by two-thirds of the congregations. The national and regional offices serve the congregations.

Strength: Common Confession. The NALC is in agreement with traditional Lutheran teachings including the Common Confession. The Common Confession is a seven-part statement of faith highlighting biblical and Confessional Lutheran doctrine written in 2005 by traditionalist Lutherans to address the particular theological concerns facing Lutherans in the 21st Century. Two of these theological concerns today are defined in the Common Confession and are stated as follows:

The Gospel of Salvation

We believe and confess that all human beings are sinners, and that sinners are redeemed by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. God alone justifies human beings by faith in Christ—a faith that God creates through the message of the Gospel. As ambassadors for Christ, God uses us to speak His Word and build His kingdom.

Marriage and Family

We believe and confess that the marriage of male and female is an institution created and blessed by God. From marriage, God forms families to serve as the building blocks of all human civilization and community. We teach and practice that sexual activity belongs exclusively within the Biblical boundaries of a faithful marriage between one man and one woman.

Strength: Benevolence. The NALC will not receive funds from its member churches and re-distribute them to various entities. Congregations decide which ministries to support with their benevolence giving. The NALC will help congregations find the best way to support Christ's mission in the world, but the congregations provide direct support. Two of the many worldwide collaborative ministries of Lutheran denominations are Lutheran World Relief and Lutheran Disaster Response.

Strength: Structure. The NALC has an intentionally flat organizational structure, but there is enough structure to help congregations with their ministries. The NALC's focus is on assisting the ministry of congregations, not on congregations assisting the ministry of the national church body. Congregations will form regional subdivisions or groups for mutual support of member congregations and to fulfill most effectively the ministry and mission of the NALC. Each regional group of congregations will adopt appropriate governing documents that are consistent with the governing documents and practice of the NALC. These regional groups will include an elected Dean, and will be accountable to the Bishop and shall support the work of the Bishop by conducting similar functions in their respective areas. Deans shall serve as pastor to pastors, their families, and congregations and will conduct a ministry of teaching and visitation with pastors and congregations. Deans may continue to serve under the call of a congregation.

Strength: Unified. Congregations joining the NALC are unified. These congregations are joining the NALC denomination for the same reasons and are supportive of the ideas of the new traditional Lutheran church denomination.

Strength: Representation and Ratification. The NALC will be governed by a convocation of representative delegates from its congregations, and major decisions will be submitted to congregations for ratification. Proposals that bind congregations in non-essentials must be accompanied by a statement of why such binding is necessary. In addition, such binding actions, as well as changes to specified sections of the NALC constitution and the adoption of teaching statements, must be approved both by the convocation and two-thirds of all congregations. There will also be a process of ratification by congregations of certain specified actions of the convocation.

Strength: Calling Pastors. The NALC will certify and maintain a clergy roster and will establish procedures for the reception of clergy from other Lutheran church bodies. Congregations may call any pastor who is on the roster of the NALC. Congregations will be more capable of seeking a pastor from a wide range of those who might be amenable to a call as compared with the ELCA process. Working with the bishop, regional pastors/deans, and a clergy connect service, the NALC will provide a roster of eligible clergy, assist in the calling process, and provide for ordination and installation of pastors.

Areas of Concern of the NALC

Concern: Growing Pains. The NALC is new and literally in its first year of operation. There are many areas that have not been fully developed and there will be changes in these areas as time elapses.

Concern: Mission Outreach and Support Groups. The NALC does not have direct relationships with large Lutheran organizations like Lutheran World Relief or Lutheran Services for the Aging, for example. However, congregations may support organizations like these directly. Lutheran camps are open to all Lutheran and even non-Lutheran congregations.

Concern: No Statewide Synods. Since there is no statewide synod, congregations will be on their own to conduct their ministries until there is growth of new NALC congregations. In times of conflict or stress, there may be fewer opportunities to find support in the new denomination. Resources offered to member congregations will be very limited.

Concern: No Seminaries or Colleges. The NALC does not have seminaries and colleges for training pastors and lay leaders. Church professionals must make their own independent decisions regarding the best sources and places to train for the ministry. The seven ELCA Lutheran seminaries accept pastoral candidates from various Lutheran and even non-Lutheran denominations, however, so there is adequate availability of pastoral training opportunities. The NALC is working on this and has assigned a work group to develop strategies in the implementation of this priority, and will work with existing Lutheran and non-Lutheran seminaries and with newer theological education initiatives such as the Institute of Lutheran Theology.

Concern: Limited Assistance Finding Pastors. NALC congregations will have less active support in finding interim and full time pastors initially in the NALC. However a large number of former ELCA rostered Lutheran pastors are joining the NALC.

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**Meeting Minutes
of the
ELCA/NALC Study Group**

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Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
ELCA/NALC Study Group Meeting
September 23, 2010 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Maynard Bridges, Annemarie Couture, Mick McMahan, Ray Sparks and Lee Stadther.

Others Present: Heather Neumann (Congregational Council President) and Pastor Brack East.

1. The meeting was called to order and started with a prayer by Chairman Lee Stadther. There were no Minutes to approve as this was the initial meeting.
2. Heather Neumann (Congregational Council President) thanked the study group members in advance for serving on the study group. She went on to say that the Church Council asked and appointed us to this study group and has charged us to research and compare the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) with the newly formed, North American Lutheran Church (NALC) and then report back to Church Council with our findings. She also noted that the study group's report in some form will be shared with Holy Trinity's disciples if the Church Council, after be presented with our finding, decides to call for a vote of the congregation to leave the ELCA and join the NALC. If a vote is called, then Council would schedule at least two forums, has written communication to Holy trinity disciples and would have the first vote around the second Sunday of November 2010. Heather then reviewed the Charter that Council wants the study group to accomplish. In section #1, the Council desires a comprehensive comparison between the ELCA and NALC denominations. Council listed six areas that they want included in this comparison but Heather said that the study group was not limited to these items alone. Sections #'s 2 and 3 are for the study group to come up with of 5 strengths and concerns or advantages and disadvantages of each denomination. She also suggested that the study group may want to address areas that may directly affect Holy Trinity.
3. Heather Neumann communicated that Council has honored Lee Stadther's request, prior to this initial meeting, and had officially renamed the task force to the ELCA/NALC Study Group. All communications, including the original Charter that was developed and distributed to the members of the study group, has been changed and the new name is now being used in all communications. The new name better reflects Holy Trinity's current affiliation with the ELCA denomination and Council's charged the study group to follow their directive of comparing the two denominations as outlined.
4. Pastor Brack addressed the committee to inform us that from the feedback received after the Lutheran Core affiliation vote that Church Council will be making plans to provide an extensive communications if there is a vote to leave the ELCA and join the NALC. They will be looking at communications in the forms of forums, printed materials, Q&A sheets, personal conversations, and communications through Sunday School classes.
5. Heather Neumann and Pastor Brack East were excused from the balance of the meeting, if they so desired. Both of them left to handle other commitments.
6. Mick McMahan begin a presentation on the NALC by showing a DVD video that the NALC had produced. He then spoke about the convention, he and Pastor Brack had attended as Lutheran Core delegates from Holy Trinity. Mick also shared some additional information about the NALC that was not brought out in the DVD video and distributed copies of the NALC's brochure. He also shared some statistical data on the decline in growth of the ELCA, both financially and in membership. He also noted that there has been some similar decline in most mainline protestant denominations.
7. Next, the committee briefly discussed how to accomplish the comparison of the two denominations. Mick had begun a document comparing the NALC and the ELCA in several areas. It was determined that he covered most of the areas that Council wanted this study group to compare. The committee decided to use Mick's document as a beginning point.
8. With more discussion, it was decided that each person on the committee would read Mick's document and edit it accordingly to the information they had available. The committee also decided that the comparison of the two denominations and to respond to Council's first item on the Charter would be

facts from referenced resources. Sections #2 and #3, strengths and concerns, would be more subjective and would come from the study group members and compiled as a part of our report.

9. The assignments for next week's meeting for each study group member...
 - a. Read Mick's "beginning point" document titled, A Comparison of the NALC and the ELCA, On Behalf of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, September 2010.
 - b. Be prepared to discuss Section #1 of the Council's Charter to prepare a comprehensive comparison between the ELCA and the NALC. The information to be discussed for this section is to be factual and should be referenced to a resource or reference site. Using the document noted in 9.a. of these minutes, each study group member is to determine ...
 - i. What items from the Council's Charter are addressed and are not addressed in this initial document.
 - ii. What other points of comparison should be added in our report.
 - iii. Suggest any other presentation formats that they think would be effective.
 - iv. To research the facts to include in 9.b. i and ii, above. Keep notes on where your factual information was found.
 - c. The study group decided to develop Sections #2 and #3 of the Council's Charter as a part of the report that will be more subjective and to make an attempt to include a compilation of the study group's thoughts of what, we as the study group, feel are the strengths and concerns (advantages and disadvantages) of each denomination. Each member of the study group is charged to develop their list of strengths and concerns (advantages and disadvantages) of each denomination and be prepared to discuss them with the objective of attaining a compilation for our report to Council.
 - d. The last item that the study group is asked to do is to think about and make a list of areas from denominational support that directly affect Holy Trinity. Determine the ones you feel are important and address how each denomination would be able to respond in each of those areas.
10. The committee agreed to the following meeting times and objectives for each of the meetings to have their report ready for a presentation to Council by their October 18th meeting.
 - a. Thursday, 9/23, 7:30pm...Initial Study Group meeting
 - b. Thursday, 9/30, 7:30pm ...Second Study Group meeting; members to report research data and present strengths and concerns from each denomination. Begin compilation of information.
 - c. Thursday, 10/7, 7:30pm ...Third Study Group meeting; review comparison from research data reported and the compilation of strengths and concerns from each denomination
 - d. Before Wednesday, 10/13, noon...Finalize documentation for Council presentation to be included in mailing of Council packets
 - e. Monday, October 18...Study Group's report to be presented to Council
 - f. After our presentation to Council, it is feasible that our report will need to be presented to Holy Trinity disciples in writing and through multiple forums.
11. Meeting adjourned. Next scheduled committee meeting will be on Thursday, September 30, 2010 at 7:30PM.

Respectfully submitted to record the study group's meeting by Lee Stadther

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church

ELCA/NALC Study Group Meeting

September 30, 2010 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Maynard Bridges, Annemarie Couture, Mick McMahan, Ray Sparks and Lee Stadther.

1. The meeting was called to order and started with a prayer by Chairman Lee Stadther. All five members of the study group agreed that the minutes dated September 23, 2010 was an accurate summary of that meeting.
2. Lee began the discussion by handing out a draft document he prepared of a comprehensive comparison between the ELCA and the NALC. Lee went on to explain his approach in preparing this document... The Council's request of this study group was to prepare a comprehensive comparison between ELCA and NALC including six topics. He went on to say that he liked that Mick included sections in his document (distributed copies to study group at last week's meeting) regarding a brief history and size of the two denominations. Then he took the council's six topics and developed one comprehensive question to address each of council's six topics included in section 1 of the Charter. Under each question he made an attempt to break the answer(s) to the question down into smaller pieces using subheadings. Lee went on to say that he did include a couple of additional items that he thought may need to be addressed (other congregational matters) and included them in this draft document. He commented that he did his best with the limited time to find factual information that addressed each question as some answers were difficult to find.
3. The study group decided we would edit Lee's information through group input. The study group only was able to get through about half the document with group's edits as time was running out. Lee requested that each group member individually edit the rest of the document with "red" marks and bring them back to our next meeting.
4. The study group members then discussed sections 2 and 3 of the Council's Charter. The study group was to come up with 5 strengths and 5 areas of concern for the ELCA and the NALC. Each person in the group had brought their written thoughts of what each felt was the strengths and concerns (advantages and disadvantages) of each denomination. The group compiled a listing on the whiteboard of everyone thoughts.
5. The meeting was concluded with a review of the assignments for next week's meeting for each study group member...
 - a. Each group member is to edit the rest of the A Comparison of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the North American Lutheran Church (NALC) Denominations document with "red" marks and brings them to our next meeting.
 - b. If anyone has any additional thoughts of strengths or concerns (advantages and disadvantages) of either denomination, they are to contact Lee by Wednesday so he may add them to the compilation.
 - c. Lee was assigned to make a call to find out how many members there were in the 18 founding congregations of the NALC and to compile a written listing of the compilation of or concerns (advantages and disadvantages) of each denomination that we discussed this evening.
6. Meeting adjourned. Next scheduled committee meeting will be on Thursday, October 7, 2010 at 7:30PM.

Respectfully submitted to record the study group's meeting by Lee Stadther

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Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
ELCA/NALC Study Group Meeting
October 7, 2010 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Maynard Bridges, Annemarie Couture, Mick McMahan, Ray Sparks and Lee Stadther.

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Lee Stadther. Maynard Bridges opened the meeting with a prayer. All five members of the study group agreed that the minutes dated September 30, 2010 was an accurate summary of that meeting.
2. Each group member came to the meeting with their edits of the document, “A Comparison of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the North American Lutheran Church (NALC) Denominations”. Lee Stadther began by noting, he made a change to the answer regarding the size of the NALC after receiving an email response from Ryan Schwarz, NALC Executive Council member on October 5, 2010. Everyone agreed to the change. The study group then began going through the rest of this document not covered in last week’s meeting, suggesting changes where they saw a need. Everyone agreed to the change before it was made and added to the final document to be presented to Council.
3. Lee Stadther had sent a document earlier in the week to the study group which represented the Strengths and Concerns for each denomination that the study group “brainstormed” on the whiteboard at last week’s meeting and included our written comments that were turned into him at the end of the meeting. Lee pulled these two sources together to present this document as his “initial” write up of the Strengths and Concerns for each denomination. This document was sent out prior to our meeting tonight, so the study group would have some time to review it and be better prepared to edit it to a final draft. The study group then began giving their suggested changes and again, everyone agreed to any change before it was made and added to the final document to be presented to council. The study group also decided that we would not limit the strengths and concerns to five. The committee felt that every strength or concern we listed was representative of areas that Council needed to consider.
4. Lee asked the study group if we needed to respond to item #4 of the council’s charter stating “Present this information to the congregation in various venues, seeking to engage as many as possible.” The study group decided a response was not needed at this time but we were to be available for any forums or other methods of presenting as Council so determined.
5. The study group did discuss the magnitude of information we have put together and questioned if it was made available to the congregation, “who would take the time to read it?”. The information included in this document is comprehensive and would be beneficial for anyone to form an opinion on either denomination. Lee then distributed a “sample” document, he titled, At-A-Glance – A Comparison of the ELCA and the NALC Denominations. Lee suggested that a document of this nature, which just provides a snippet of the information included in the comprehensive document, could be a method to provide our research to the congregation. This document would give a very brief synopsis, side-by-side, comparison of the response to each question or topic, on each denomination. If a disciple of Holy Trinity wanted more information they could then refer to the comprehensive document and if they even wanted more information than what is provided in the comprehensive document; they could refer to the footnotes in that document as a place to get additional information. For those that wanted to see or reference this comprehensive document, which was prepared for Council, it could be place on the church’s website as a pdf file. For those in the congregation that do not have web access; copies could be provided from the church office. It was decided that this document would not be included in our written presentation material but Lee would make this suggestion to Council on October 18th Council meeting at the conclusion of the study group’s presentation.

6. The meeting was concluded with a review of the assignments to complete prior to the distribution of the study group's written report to Council by noon on Wednesday, October 13th...
 - a. Lee will make the edits as agreed to Section 1 of the report, A Comparison of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the North American Lutheran Church (NALC) Denominations.
 - b. Lee will make the edits as agreed to Sections 2 and 3 of the report, A Comparison of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the North American Lutheran Church (NALC) Denominations.
 - c. Lee will review the endnote references of the report, A Comparison of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the North American Lutheran Church (NALC) Denominations, for accuracy.
 - d. Lee will complete the write up of the process the study group took in developing the report, A Comparison of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the North American Lutheran Church (NALC) Denominations and include it on the reports opening pages.
 - e. Lee will prepare the minutes from tonight's meeting and distribute them to the members of the study group. In turn, each study group member is to review the minutes for accuracy and for any issues or discussions that should be included in this record and inform Lee if so. If the study group member agrees that the minutes dated October 7, 2010 are to be found as an accurate summary of that meeting they will acknowledge that to Lee so he may include this record in the study group's report to Council.
 - f. Lee is to be present at the October 18, 2010 Congregational Council meeting as Chair and a representative of the study group to present our report as written and distributed and to address any questions the Council may have with regards to our study group's process or reporting. Mick and Ray will also be present as current Council members and to present and/or respond with Lee for the study group.
7. Lee Stadther, Chair, thanked the members of the study group for their time and service with this project. Lee then noted that this meeting concludes any additional needs for this study group to convene unless the Congregational Council has any additional request of services from this study group.

Respectfully submitted to record the study group's meeting by Lee Stadther

Endnotes for Resources

- ¹ <http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/History.aspx>
- ² Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Gastonia, NC records
- ³ <http://www.thenalc.org/news.php>
- ⁴ Mick McMahan, Lutheran Core delegate for Holy Trinity
- ⁵ <http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Communication-Services/News/Resources/Stats.aspx>
- ⁶ October 5, 2010 email response from Ryan M. Schwarz, NALC Executive Council member
- ⁷ <http://www.thenalc.org/contact.php>
- ⁸ <http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Office-of-the-Secretary/ELCA-Governance/Constitutions-of-the-Evangelical-Lutheran-Church-in-America.aspx> and <http://www.thenalc.org/constitution.php>
- ⁹ Report to Holy Trinity Church Council for Task Force on Alternative Congregation Affiliations, dated November 18, 2009
- ¹⁰ http://commonconfession.blogspot.com/2006_01_01_archive.html and <http://www.lutherancore.org/pdf/biblestudy.pdf>
- ¹¹ http://www.lcms.org/graphics/assets/media/LCMS/wa_elca-lcms.pdf
- ¹² The Common Confession (2005)
- ¹³ <http://www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/New-or-Returning-to-Church/Dig-Deeper/Salvation.aspx>
- ¹⁴ <http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Faithful-Mission/Being-Faithful/Social-Statements.aspx>
- ¹⁵ <http://www.thenalc.org/basics.php>
- ¹⁶ <http://www.thenalc.org/constitution.php>
- ¹⁷ <http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Office-of-the-Presiding-Bishop/Plan-for-Mission/Our-Mission-and-Vision.aspx>
- ¹⁸ <http://www.thenalc.org/mission.php>
- ¹⁹ <http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Leadership.aspx>
- ²⁰ <http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions.aspx>
- ²¹ <http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Synodical-Relations/Our-Responsibilities.aspx>
- ²² http://www.nclutheran.org/Who_We_Are.127.html
- ²³ http://www.nclutheran.org/Mission_Support.228.html
- ²⁴ <http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Office-of-the-Treasurer/Churchwide-Budget.aspx>
- ²⁵ <http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Communication-Services/News/Releases.aspx#&&a=4649>
- ²⁶ <http://www.elca.org/Who%20We%20Are/Our%20Three%20Expressions/Churchwide%20Organization/Office%20of%20the%20Presiding%20Bishop.aspx>
- ²⁷ <http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Synodical-Relations/Synodical-Leadership/Conference-of-Bishops.aspx>

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- ²⁸ <http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Office-of-the-Secretary/ELCA-Governance/Constitutions-of-the-Evangelical-Lutheran-Church-in-America.aspx>
- ²⁹ <http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Synodical-Relations/Synodical-Leadership.aspx>
- ³⁰ <http://www.thenalc.org/structure.php>
- ³¹ http://www.nclutheran.org/search/search.php?template_demo=&query_string=constitution
- ³² <http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Ecumenical-and-Inter-Religious-Relations/Conciliar-Relations/World-Council-of-Churches.aspx>
- ³³ 2011 NC Synod budget found at <http://www.nclutheran.org/FormsDocuments.206.html#missionsupport>
- ³⁴ <http://www.elca.org/Our-Faith-In-Action/Stories-of-Faith-in-Action/Mission-Support/FAQs.aspx>
- ³⁵ <http://www.lwr.org/> and <http://www.ldr.org/>
- ³⁶ <http://www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith/Education.aspx>
- ³⁷ Letter (six-pages) to Synod Bishops and Vice Presidents from Secretary of the ELCA, David D Swartling, dated January 19, 2010