

November 1, 2009

Dear GLC Church Council,

On Thursday, October 1, 2009, our Task Force was asked to gather information regarding the following three possibilities for Geneva Lutheran Church's (GLC) affiliation:

1. Remain part of the ELCA
2. Join another Lutheran synod/body
3. Become an independent Lutheran congregation.

With respect to the first option, our task force investigated the implications of continuing our affiliation with the ELCA. These results can be found in *Exhibit B*.

For the second option, we investigated 31 different Lutheran synods/bodies (*Exhibit C*). This research determined that only two would be viable options for GLC: The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations (AFLC) and Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC). Accordingly, research for these two synods can be found in *Exhibit B*.

In addition to these larger reports, a more concise Executive Summary of our findings has been provided in *Exhibit A*.

It is important to note that during our investigation multiple synods were ruled out given they do not ordain women. While we also found that the AFLC does not allow women to serve as pastors, we concluded that since all of the information had already been gathered for AFLC, we would retain them as a "test synod" for council review. In the event that council determines there is interest in learning more about other synods previously ruled out for not ordaining women, our task force will require additional time to gather and prepare those materials.

With respect to the third option, our committee determined that becoming a so-called independent Lutheran congregation would not be a viable option. We could find only four Lutheran congregations nationwide that were functioning independently (*Exhibit D*). In each case, the congregations had been previously affiliated with a larger Lutheran body (ELCA, LCMS, WELS), and had been removed for either disciplinary reasons or disagreements with the synod body. That said, each of these churches expressed a desire to be affiliated with a larger Lutheran body. While they enjoyed the autonomy of decision making, they hungered for the support and fellowship of a larger body. Because it was difficult to find even these congregations, and because each church appeared to actually desire some type of affiliation, we concluded that it was not a viable option for GLC to function as an independent Lutheran congregation.

In addition to the 3 primary options we were asked to research, we also investigated the Lutheran CORE (Coalition for Renewal) organization to determine if this was an entity that GLC could affiliate with. CORE is currently in the process of determining what its function will be moving forward. Initially, CORE was working to be an agent for reform within the ELCA. However, following the August, 2009 synod assembly vote, CORE determined that it will no longer work in this capacity.

While CORE will likely become a free-standing synod at some point in the future, final information about how this will be structured will not be available until approximately June,

2010. Currently, congregations can join CORE as a means of expressing support for their doctrinal positions, but this affiliation is not considered joining a synod. In the interim, CORE has produced a valuable resource for congregations entitled "What to do now?" which offers suggestions for addressing legal/constitutional matters and provides a checklist for congregations discerning options vis a vis the ELCA. For more information on CORE, see *Exhibit E*.

In the course of performing our research, we have observed other congregations going through the process of determining whether to remain affiliated with the ELCA. Many of these congregations are taking the following actions:

1. Most pastors are taking an affirmative role in the process, teaching and providing instruction to their congregations about the issues at hand.
2. These pastors have worked cooperatively with church leadership, including council and task force members. Note that this does not mean that all parties are necessarily in agreement as to outcome, but rather that all parties agree to engage in discussing the matter openly.
3. Members of the congregation are given full disclosure of all of the potential options. This often includes having representatives from the ELCA, other synods under consideration, and Lutheran CORE come to the church for a series of short informational presentations and Q&A sessions with the congregation.
4. Concurrent with the congregational process of discernment, churches have also established action teams and/or church legal counsel to evaluate and address the legalities involved with leaving the ELCA.

At this juncture, the next logical step is for Pastor and Church Council to become familiar with the options outlined in the attached packet. The congregation must then be made fully aware of where we are and what the viable options are. This education process could ideally include having representatives from each viable Lutheran synod/body as well as CORE come to GLC to speak with our members. Should this be the route chosen, *Exhibit F* provides a sample approach, and *Exhibit G* provides key contacts.

Please feel free to contact any member of our task force should you wish to discuss any aspect of our research further.




Respectfully submitted,
Affiliation Task Force

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	ELCA <i>Evangelical Lutheran Church in America</i>	LCMC <i>Lutheran Congregations in Missions for Christ</i>	AFLC <i>Association of Free Lutheran Congregations</i>
Finances			
Employee Benefits and Insurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Retirement plans - Long-term disability - Short-term disability - Survivor benefits - Life insurance - Accidental death and dismemberment - Group medical - Dental - Health Reimbursement Arrangement - Flexible Spending Account 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Retirement plans - Long-term disability - Life insurance - Accidental death and dismemberment - Group medical - Dental - Health Spending Account. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Retirement plans - Long term disability - Survivor benefits - Life insurance - Accidental death and dismemberment - Health Reimbursement Arrangement - Flexible Spending Account.
Pension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of retirement options - Transfer of former balances allowed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pension fund with great deal of individual control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pension fund defined by congregation - Congregational matching contribution - Transfer of former balances allowed
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Short-term paid up to 2 months; long-term thereafter - Covers monthly income, retirement contributions, health/survivor benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Long-term disability only (short-term not provided) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Long-term disability only (short-term not provided)
Continuing Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multiple continuing education opportunities - Provision of grants in certain circumstances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - None offered through LCMC - Congregations use own discretion on budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - None offered through AFLC - Congregations use own discretion on budget
Property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Control of property defined by congregational constitution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Each congregation retains its own property/assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Each congregation retains its own property/assets
Benevolence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not mandated, but expectations shared by synod 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not mandated, but 10% tithe encouraged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not mandated; congregational discretion/free will
Governance			
Constitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ELCA has constitution and model for congregations - Congregation constitution needs ELCA approval 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LCMC has constitution and bylaws - Congregation constitution at congregation discretion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AFLC has no constitution - Congregation constitution needs AFLC review
Process of Affiliation	<p><i>Not applicable given we are currently affiliated.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LCMC is intentionally easy to join and leave. - Congregation may belong to both ELCA and LCMC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AFLC leadership visits first - Constitution submitted for approval to AFLC
Accountability of Pastors	<p>Pastors are governed by two principal documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Visions and Expectations for Ordained Ministers b) Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All pastors must subscribe to Statement of Faith - Criminal convictions warrant removal from roster 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adhere to Fundamental Principles & Rules for Work - Mostly left to congregational discretion
Representation/Voting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 voting members to Synod assembly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 delegates for <=500 members, 1 for 200 after that 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Left to congregational discretion
Accountability of Congregation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Congregations accountable to own constitutions - ELCA outlines some conditions for discipline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Congregations agree to the basic tenants of LCMC - LCMC may suspend a church for cause 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Must adhere to Fund Principles and Rules for Work - Discipline process unclear
Structure/Hierarchy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 10,500 Congregations, 65 synods, 1 churchwide org 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Congregations, Districts (<i>optional</i>), Board of Trustees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AFLC is free association - Each local congregation is a separate corporation - Several add'l corporations direct common endeavors
Pastoral Calls & Ordination Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ordination at local congregation by bishop - 21-step call process involves call committee, church council and local synod - Women allowed as pastors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Congregations authorized to ordain/call per LCMC standards - Pastors may belong to other assn/church rosters - Congregations can call without LCMC approval - Women allowed to as pastors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ordination candidate must be approved for call by AFLC Coordinating Committee - Congregation selects and calls own pastor - Women not allowed as pastors

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Resources/Practices			
Overall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Has own publishing house - Website offers a huge variety of resources 	N/A	N/A
Liturgy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No required liturgy - Provides liturgy, reading and sermon suggestions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No required liturgy - Worship style determined by congregation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No liturgy required - Simplicity encouraged
Worship/Sunday School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Printed worship resources/hymnals - Various educational materials for all ages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No official worship or Sunday School materials exist - Many congregations use previous materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sunday School curriculum
Pastoral Supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - List of available supply pastors, 62 at present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - List of rostered clergy available on website - Local pulpit supply at congregation discretion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No information available
Camps/Colleges/Seminaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 8 seminaries, 28 colleges, 2,000+ schools/camps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No seminary, but cooperates with other seminaries - Seminary Dept Relief fund. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 seminary, 1 Bible School, 1 boot camp
Theology/Doctrine			
Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Blessed and ordained by God - Indispensable social institution based on trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Blessed and ordained by God 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Blessed and ordained by God
Marriage/Divorce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Permits cong's to support same-gender marriage - Divorce discouraged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marriage between 1 man / 1 woman only - Divorce discouraged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marriage between 1 man / 1 woman only - Divorce discouraged
Sin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Defined per Augsburg Confession. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All are born into sin, but also have free will and are still responsible for own sins. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sin against God's law separates one from God
Sacraments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 Sacraments: Holy Communion and Holy Baptism - Open communion sanctioned - Infant baptism sanctioned. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 Sacraments: Holy Communion and Holy Baptism - Open communion sanctioned - Infant baptism sanctioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 Sacraments: Holy Communion and Holy Baptism - No open communion policy, but must self-examine - Infant baptism sanctioned.
Salvation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - He who believes in and accepts the sufficient work of Jesus for his salvation and is baptized, is saved
Bible Version/Translation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Value in reading a various translations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No one version preferred - At congregational discretion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No one version preferred - At congregational discretion
Pastoral & Lay Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Men or women allowed - Same-gender allowed if monogamous relationship - Rostered pastors must graduate from ELCA seminary or affiliate with an ELCA seminary for some parts of the education process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Men or women allowed - Same-gender not allowed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Men only; women not allowed - Same gender not allowed
Sexuality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opposes non-monogamous, promiscuous or casual sexual relationships of any kind 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - God's intent for marriage was 1 man / 1 woman 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - God's intent for marriage was 1 man / 1 woman
Authority of Scripture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bible inspired Word of God and sole authoritative source - Individual interpretations respected, yet always through the lens of Jesus' person, life and witness - Studying various versions/scholars encouraged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bible inspired Word of God and sole authoritative source 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bible inspired Word of God and is authentic/inerrant

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Identity			
Marketing/Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Websites, county-wide resource centers, TV/video productions, radio ministry, TV ads, newsletter, news 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Website, social media, some printed materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing includes primarily newsletters, brochures and pamphlets.
Logo/Signage	 <p>Evangelical Lutheran Church in America God's work. Our hands.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No formal requirement; congregations asked to use ELCA brand 	 <p>No requirement to use LCMC logo and/or signage.</p>	 <p>AFLC Association of Free Lutheran Congregations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No requirement to use LCMC logo and/or signage.
Outreach/Ministries/ Evangelism (e.g. Missionaries)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Many connections with outreach organizations - Campus/outdoor ministries, social service agencies - Establishes mission congregations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Congregations deal directly with missionaries and mission churches. - Local outreach determined by the congregation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Several outreach entities
Other			
	<p><u>ELCA Social Statement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recently adopted social statement (2/3 vote) - Stresses building of trust is central to relationships regardless of gender mix <p><u>Bound Conscience</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Respecting convictions of others who may have different convictions/understandings of Scripture and tradition 		

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Finances			
Employee Benefits and Insurance	<p>Provides full range of benefits for full-time and part-time pastors and lay employees, including retirement plans, short/long-term disability plans, survivor benefits, and group life insurance. Also covers accidental death and dismemberment.</p> <p>Group medical insurance offered for both current employees and retirees. Dental insurance is also offered.</p> <p>What is offered is sponsored and paid for by the congregation. HRA (Health Reimbursement Arrangement), and FSA (Flexible Spending Account) also offered.</p> <p>Lay employees are eligible to enroll if scheduled to work at least 20 hours/week for six or more months per year.</p>	<p>Provides full range of benefits for employees working 30 or more hours per week, including retirement plans, long-term disability plans, and life insurance (which must be purchased with long-term disability). Also covers accidental death and dismemberment.</p> <p>Long term disability is not available if an individual has waived Social Security benefits. Short-term disability is not provided.</p> <p>Group medical insurance* is Blue Cross Blue Shield of MN. Dental insurance is also offered. <i>* Note: Abortion is explicitly not covered under medical plan.</i></p> <p>HSA is also offered.</p> <p>It is unclear whether this same coverage applies to lay leaders.</p> <p>Paid for by pastor and congregation.</p>	<p>Provides full range of benefits for full-time pastors and lay employees working 32 or more hours per week, including retirement plans, long term disability insurance, survivor benefits, and group life insurance. Also covers accidental death and dismemberment.</p> <p>Group health insurance not offered. The Benefits Handbook makes no mention of dental insurance.</p> <p>HRA (Health Reimbursement Arrangement), and FSA (Flexible Spending Account) are offered for tax advantage purposes.</p> <p>Paid for by congregation and individuals.</p>
Pension	<p>The ELCA Board of Pensions offers a number of retirement options, including a defined benefit pension plan that guarantees retired pastors a specific benefit upon retirement.</p> <p>New employees to the ELCA may be able to transfer their former employer's retirement plan balance over to the ELCA.</p>	<p>Individual control of pension fund administered through Edward Jones. Pastors have a great deal of control over their individual pension fund.</p> <p>Congregation participation is optional.</p> <p>New employees cannot transfer prior balances.</p>	<p>Provided by AFLC for pastors and workers by Hartford Life Insurance Company. Offers a defined contribution retirement (i.e., congregation defines what they will put into the plan, such as matching contributions) rather than defining some guaranteed benefit at retirement.</p> <p>Currently, each participating congregation must match 166.7% of the employee's contributions up to 5% of gross wages.</p> <p>Each congregation may choose whether they want to participate.</p> <p>An employee of a non-participating congregation cannot contribute to the plan.</p> <p>New employees to the AFLC may be able to transfer their former employer's retirement plan balance over to the AFLC.</p>

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Disability	<p>Offers paid disability benefits beginning two months after disability begins, continuing for length of the disability through full retirement age (beyond in some instances). Plan provides income/benefits including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly income • Contributions to ELCA Retirement Plan account • Health and survivor benefits coverage <p>With regard to short-term disability, the congregation is responsible for paying the first two months of benefits.</p>	<p>Short-term disability is not provided.</p> <p>Long-term coverage begins after 60 days, with health and survivor benefits only.</p>	<p>Offers long term disability only.</p>
Continuing Education	<p>Offers multiple continuing education opportunities for pastors and congregational members. Also provides grants to support the cost of continuing education in certain circumstances.</p>	<p>None offered through LCMC directly. Individual congregations and districts use own discretion regarding how much to budget for continuing education (e.g. sabbaticals, seminarian internships, annual leadership conferences, etc.).</p> <p>An annual leadership conference is hosted by LCMC.</p>	<p>None as was found in literature for pastors or lay workers that would be paid for by AFLC. Fundamental Principles 5, 7, and 9 leaves this to congregational discretion.</p>
Property	<p>Control of property, including control of property in event of a split in the congregation, is determined by congregational constitution.</p> <p>ELCA has approved constitutions stating that property will remain with the congregation provided it becomes a part of another Lutheran body or body in full communion with ELCA.</p>	<p>Except otherwise agreed in writing between LCMC and one or more member congregations, each congregation retains its own property/assets.</p>	<p>Congregations maintain complete control over their property.</p> <p>No involvement by AFLC unless stated in congregation's constitution.</p> <p>Disposal of property in the event of a split in the congregation is determined by the current congregation constitution.</p>
Benevolence	<p>While the ELCA establishes benevolence expectations for the support of the broader church and mission opportunities, there is no specific sanction for failure of congregations to do so.</p>	<p>LCMC does not dictate giving, nor do they set any guidelines for benevolence. Rather, congregations are encouraged to tithe 10% of budget.</p> <p>Congregations are not required to give to LCMC, but many voluntarily donate a portion of their benevolence to LCMC.</p> <p>Funds are administered by congregation, who are encouraged to use some funds locally and some globally. Benevolence is to include not just sending funds, but congregational involvement.</p> <p><i>Note: LCMC does not administer any benevolence (and has an annual nationwide operating budget of ~ \$300K).</i></p>	<p>Benevolence gifts to AFLC are left to congregational discretion and free will.</p>

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Governance			
Constitution	<p>Drafted by congregation for review by ELCA.</p> <p>ELCA has both its own constitution and a Model Constitution for Congregations.</p> <p><u>Note:</u> The ELCA has approved congregational constitutions that differ in substantial respects from the ELCA Model Constitution for Congregations (e.g., Hosanna Lutheran Church).</p>	<p>LCMC has its own constitution and bylaws which are available online. As part of joining LCMC a congregation accepts their master constitution.</p> <p>There is no reference to LCMC approving individual congregational constitutions, so is it believed that congregational constitutions are at the discretion of each individual congregation, as long as they do not conflict with the master LCMC constitution.</p>	<p>Drafted by congregation for review by AFLC (as part of affiliation process).</p> <p>AFLC has no constitution, only a set of Fundamental Principles and Rules For Work as a guide for congregations.</p>
Process of Affiliation	<p><i>Not applicable given we are currently affiliated.</i></p>	<p>LCMC is intentionally easy to join and leave. Congregational membership involves completing a 2-page subscription form which includes the Statement of Faith. It should be noted that currently a congregation may belong to both the ELCA and LCMC, however a pastor must choose to be rostered with only one organization.</p>	<p>Steps for affiliation are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Visit by AFLC president or his assistant 2. Constitution submitted for approval to AFLC. 3. Affiliation form filled out and submitted. 4. Process takes a few weeks.
Accountability of Pastors	<p>Pastors are governed by two principal documents:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Visions and Expectations for Ordained Ministers b) Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline. <p>The first document is aspirational. The second outlines specific misconduct leading to pastoral discipline.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. disclosure of confidential communications 2. neglect of duties 3. misconduct in relationship to family 4. sexual morality 5. personal or professional fiscal malfeasance 6. membership in inappropriate organizations 7. conviction of a felony. 	<p>All pastors rostered with LCMC must subscribe to the LCMC Statement of Faith, comply with all LCMC ministry standards, and be accountable to the LCMC Ministry Board.</p> <p>As for misconduct, knowledge/disclosure of criminal convictions may warrant removal as a rostered LCMC pastor.</p>	<p>Besides adhering to Fundamental Principles and Rules for Work, accountability of Pastors is left to discretion of the congregation.</p>
Representation/Voting	<p>Each congregation is entitled to send two voting members to the Metro Chicago Synod assembly.</p> <p>Voting members for the bi-annual Churchwide Assembly are elected at the synod assemblies.</p> <p>Each synod is entitled to elect one voting member for every 5,800 baptized members in the synod and one voting member for every 50 congregations in the synod. Each synod is entitled to at least two voting members.</p> <p>Synodical bishops also are ex officio voting members of the Churchwide Assembly.</p>	<p>Each congregation is entitled to send two delegates for up to 500 member churches, and 1 delegate for each 200 thereafter to the annual LCMC convention.</p> <p>A national LCMC decision does not become binding on congregation until it is ratified and approved by a 2/3 vote of all member congregations. In other words, the national body cannot bind local churches without their approval.</p>	<p>Left to the congregation through their constitution and use of Fundamental Principles and Rules For Work.</p> <p>4 AFLC regional assemblies that congregations may attend.</p>

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Accountability of Congregation	<p>Congregations are principally accountable to their own constitutions. Congregations can, however, be subject to discipline for the following issues:</p> <p>a. Departing from the faith confessed by the ELCA as set forth in both current and proposed constitutions.</p> <p>b. Willfully disregarding or violating any of the criteria for recognition as congregations of the ELCA.</p> <p>c. Willfully disregarding or violating the provisions of the constitution or bylaws of the ELCA.</p>	<p>Congregations must agree to the basic tenants of LCMC.</p> <p>LCMC may suspend the membership of a church for cause by three-quarters vote of the LCMC board of trustees.</p>	<p>Must adhere to Fundamental Principles and Rules for Work.</p> <p>Discipline process is unclear.</p>
Structure/Hierarchy	<p>3 entities - congregations, synods, churchwide org.</p> <p>Congregations: ELCA is made up of ~10,500 congregations in the US, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands.</p> <p>Synods: ELCA congregations are organized into 65 synods who unite the work of congregations within their areas, serving as regional support and guiding pastors/staff candidates through the call process. MetroChicago Synod is led by Bishop Wayne Miller.</p> <p>Churchwide Organization: Includes ELCA Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, officers, offices and churchwide units. Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson.</p>	<p>LCMC maintains a flat structure consisting of member congregations and the Board of Trustees.</p> <p>Congregations may form into districts, or groupings formed around geography, theology, values, shared interests, worship styles, etc. Districts govern themselves within the guidelines set by the association (LCMC) and have not national legislative authority. Joining a district is not required.</p> <p>Areas are reapportioned each year as new congregations join the association, to keep balanced geographical representation on the Board of Trustees.</p>	<p>The AFLC is not an incorporated synod, but a free association. Each local congregation is a separate corporation, and several additional corporations are sponsored by them to direct our common endeavors.</p> <p>These five corporations are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordinating Committee - School Corporation - Mission Corporation - Association Retreat Center - AFLC Foundation




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Pastoral Calls & Ordination Process	<p>All candidates for ordination must receive a call letter from either the local congregation, local Synod Council, or churchwide organization through the Churchwide Council. These letters must be signed by the candidate, congregational officer and synod bishop. Ordinations must be performed by the Metro Chicago bishop or another currently serving bishop within the ELCA. Ordinations occur at the local congregation during a worship service.</p> <p>The 21-step call Process involves the congregation, call committee, church council and local synod.</p> <p>Pastoral Rosters maintained by synod. Women allowed on the pastoral rosters.</p>	<p>Member churches of LCMC are authorized to call and ordain ministers pursuant to the standards member churches adopt from time to time. Called and ordained LCMC pastors may belong to clergy rosters of another association or church.</p> <p>Congregations may issue a call to whomever they choose, but must follow LCMC Ministry Standards, governing documents, and Statement of Faith. A call packet is available to guide congregations through the process; still due diligence responsibility lies with congregation.</p> <p>Pastors seeking a call advertise their profiles online, and congregations are free to interview any available pastor. Conversely, congregations can display a call packet online for pastors to search.</p> <p>LCMC approval is not needed before placing a call. Congregations are free to call pastors regardless of whether they are identified on LCMC list of pastors.</p> <p>Women allowed to as pastors.</p>	<p>A candidate must be approved and recommended or call by the Coordinating Committee of AFLC to be ordained. B7The AFLC requires that ordained pastors accept the innerrancy and infallibility of Scripture.</p> <p>A free congregation selects and calls its own pastor.</p> <p>The AFLC Coordinating Committee maintains the clergy roster, which includes Licensed Lay pastors, Fellowship Roster Pastors (transfers) and Regular Ordained Clergy</p> <p>Women are not allowed as pastors.</p>
Resources/Practices			
Overall	The ELCA has its own publishing house and its website offers a huge variety of worship and educational resources.	N/A	N/A
Liturgy	No required liturgy but generally follows the Revised Common Lectionary of liturgical readings. Sponsors a liturgical planning resource, <i>Sundays and Seasons</i> , with suggestions for hymns and special music appropriate to the readings each week, and adult and children's sermon suggestions. Numerous resources for pastors, worship committees, church musicians and altar guilds.	<p>LCMC makes no recommendations. Worship style is determined by the congregation.</p> <p>Most congregations use liturgical/worship planning resources available from other Lutheran denominations</p>	<p>Makes no recommendation as to the use of liturgy and vestments except that simplicity in worship is encouraged.</p> <p>Preaching the word of God must be the central part of the service, meeting the needs of all who hear.</p> <p>Hymn books honor the word of God and the Sacraments. "The Ambassador Hymnal" contains several orders of worship.</p> <p>Most congregations use liturgical planning resources available from other Lutheran denominations.</p>

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Worship/Sunday School	Offers printed worship resources/hymnals including <i>Evangelical Lutheran Worship, This Far by Faith, With One Voice</i> , and <i>Worship and Praise Songbook</i> . Has specific Schools and Early Childhood Ministries and provides numerous resources for lifelong learning from Sunday School through adult education.	No official worship or Sunday School materials exist at this time. Many congregations continue to use their previous hymnals, worship music and Sunday School materials. That said, some new resources are being developed by various different collaborative efforts of LCMC congregations. Typically this information is exchanged at the Annual Gathering and Leadership Conference.	"The Ambassador Series" is a Sunday School curriculum, plus information for confirmation and new member instruction. Most congregations use worship planning resources available from other Lutheran denominations.
Pastoral Supply	The Metropolitan Synod of the ELCA website has a list of available supply pastors, 62 at the current time.	The congregation is responsible for calling pastors, although the LCMC offers a list of rostered clergy on their website. Local pulpit supply is at the discretion of the congregation, however pastors need to agree with the LCMC Statement of Faith.	No information available.
Camps/Colleges/Seminaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 8 seminaries - 28 ELCA related colleges - 2,000+ schools & early childhood centers/camps 	LCMC does not have a seminary. Works cooperatively with a number of seminaries around the country. Publishes ministry standards that include course requirements for ensuring pastors have a solid confessional Lutheran theological education, and provides a Seminary Dept Relief fund. Most LCMC congregations directly support church camps or campus ministries of their choice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Association of Free Lutheran Theological Seminary - Association Free Lutheran Bible School - FLY boot camp
Theology/Doctrine			
Family	Indispensable social institution because of its role in establishing conditions of trust and protection for the vulnerable. All types of families are recognized, and all families have the responsibility to provide safety and develop trustworthy relationships.	Blessed and ordained by God.	Blessed and ordained by God.

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Marriage/Divorce	<p>Marriage is a covenant of mutual promises and commitment blessed by God. While historic Christian tradition and Lutheran Confessions have recognized marriage as a covenant between a man and woman, some feel that marriage can also be used to describe similar benefits and support for same-gender couples entering lifelong monogamous relationships.</p> <p>ELCA lacks consensus on how to regard these relationships, yet encourages respect for the conscience bound belief of their neighbor, noting that these different beliefs follow from strongly held different understandings of Scripture/tradition.</p> <p>ELCA as a whole has not endorsed the blessing or marriage of same sex couples, but <i>permits</i> (not mandates) congregations to find ways to hold publicly accountable same-gender relationships that intend to be lifelong and monogamous.</p> <p>Pastors carry both legal and religious responsibilities for marriage, and hold and exercise pastoral discretion for the decision to marry in the church.</p> <p>In some situations the trust in a marriage becomes so deeply damaged that the marriage must come to a legal</p>	<p>The LCMC affirms that God created us male and female, and that it is God's will and intention that human sexual expression and fulfillment take place only within the boundaries of marriage between one man and one woman.</p> <p>LCMC does not publish a specific position on the topic of divorce, however, they do affirm they are firmly committed to accepting the normative authority of the Bible. See Other.</p>	<p>Marriage is between one man and one woman, like Christ and the Church.</p> <p>Same-sex relationships not sanctioned.</p> <p>Divorce should be guarded against as stated in the Bible.</p>
Sin	<p>Definition of sin is consistent with Augsburg Confession</p> <p>All are born into sin, but also have free will and are still responsible for own sins.</p>	<p>All are born into sin, but also have free will and are still responsible for own sins.</p>	<p>Sin separates one from God. The Christian seeks to refrain from those acts, thoughts and words that are against a stated law of God.</p> <p>Where actions and practices are neither forbidden nor encouraged in Scripture specifically, the earnest believer should search the Scriptures for principles to guide decisions and conduct.</p>
Sacraments	<p>2 Sacraments: Holy Communion and Holy Baptism</p> <p>Open communion sanctioned. Believe in real presence of Christ (body and blood) through the bread and wine.</p> <p>Infant baptism sanctioned.</p>	<p>2 Sacraments: Holy Communion and Holy Baptism</p> <p>Open communion sanctioned. Believe in real presence of Christ (body and blood) through the bread and wine.</p> <p>Infant baptism sanctioned.</p>	<p>2 Sacraments: Holy Communion and Holy Baptism</p> <p>No official policy on open communion, however each person must examine themselves and understand that real presence of Christ (body and blood) is received through the bread and wine.</p> <p>Infant baptism sanctioned.</p>

	ELCA <i>Evangelical Lutheran Church in America</i>	LCMC <i>Lutheran Congregations in Missions for Christ</i>	AFLC <i>Association of Free Lutheran Congregations</i>
Salvation	Saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.	Saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.	He who believes in and accepts the sufficient work of Jesus for his salvation and is baptized, is a child of God
Bible Version/Translation	Value in reading a number of current translations and comparing curious or troubling texts with the aid of commentaries that seek to clarify meanings. Readers are encouraged to a) seek to understand the depth of what is being said and value scholarship/textual study, and b) discover the text's meaning/context for those first addressed by the authors, as well as for today	No one version or revision of the Bible to the exclusion of others. Recommend all that are reverent and true translations. At congregational discretion.	No one version or revision of the Bible to the exclusion of others. Recommend all that are reverent and true translations. At congregational discretion.
Pastoral & Lay Leadership	<p>The pastoral office can be filled by either men or women as long as they are qualified.</p> <p>The ELCA recently adopted a resolution (by majority of voting members at the 2009 churchwide assembly), which <i>permits</i> congregations to call/roster members in publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous same-gender relationships. However, no congregation is required to do so. No one is asked to violate their bound conscience, and all are asked to respect the bound conscience of others.</p> <p>Leaders who have been called to serve in the ELCA are considered to be rostered. Ordained leaders are pastors. To qualify for ordained ministry, individuals must graduate either from an ELCA seminary or, if they attend a non-ELCA seminary, they must affiliate with an ELCA seminary for some parts of the education process.</p> <p>Rostered lay leaders serve in the role of Associate in Ministry or Diaconal Lay Leader. Lay leadership training is provided largely at the synod level through formal education as well as various workshops and continuing education courses.</p> <p>Those who are going to serve as ministers of word and</p>	<p>The pastoral office can be filled by either men or women as long as they are qualified.</p> <p>The LCMC does not support individuals in same-gender relationships to serve in a pastoral capacity.</p> <p>Those who are going to serve as ministers of word and sacrament must be ordained.</p>	<p>The pastoral office is to be filled by qualified men only.</p> <p>The AFLC does not support individuals in same-gender relationships to serve in a pastoral capacity.</p> <p>Pastors must be trained, examined, and ordained for ministry in Lutheran congregations, required to support AFLC institutions, and listed on the Fellowship or Clergy roster of the AFLC (as either an ordained or licensed lay pastor).</p> <p>Christian lay people practice their gifts in the life of the congregations, in fellowship outside the congregation, and in service to a needy world. Lay pastors on the AFLC roster may be exempted from ordination.</p> <p>Those who are going to serve as ministers of word and sacrament must be ordained.</p>

	<p style="text-align: center;">ELCA <i>Evangelical Lutheran Church in America</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">LCMC <i>Lutheran Congregations in Missions for Christ</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">AFLC <i>Association of Free Lutheran Congregations</i></p>
<p>Sexuality</p>	<p>Opposes non-monogamous, promiscuous or casual sexual relationships of any kind. Indulging immediate desires for satisfaction, sexual or otherwise, is to "gratify the desires of the flesh". Such transient encounters do not allow for trust in the relationship that creates the context for trust in sexual intimacy.</p> <p>Regarding homosexuality, the ELCA is opposed to all forms of violence or discrimination against homosexuals and is committed to welcoming all people, regardless of sexual orientation, into our congregation.</p> <p>Regarding same-gender committed relationships, the recent ELCA social statement recognizes that its members are not in agreement, and identifies different perspectives that are present amongst us. (see Other)</p>	<p>Affirms that God created us male and female, and that it is God's will and intention that human sexual expression and fulfillment take place only within the boundaries of marriage between one man and one woman.</p>	<p>Affirms that God created us male and female, and that it is God's will and intention that human sexual expression and fulfillment take place only within the boundaries of marriage between one man and one woman.</p> <p>Directs individuals to share love in Christ for every person, including those leading homosexual lifestyle while rejecting their lifestyle as sin.</p> <p>Encourages prayer and support for individuals and organizations seeking to reach and rescue those in homosexual lifestyle.</p>
<p>Authority of Scripture</p>	<p>The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God. Inspired by God's Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ.</p> <p>Through them, God's spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in this world. The ELCA accepts the Bible as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith and life.</p> <p>ELCA Lutherans respect individual interpretations of the Bible, yet always through the lens of Jesus' person, life and witness. Studying various versions/scholars is encouraged in Christian community, using helps provided by scholarly work to get to the heart and meaning of Biblical texts.</p>	<p>The LCMC believes the Bible as the inspired Word of God and the sole authoritative source of their proclamation, faith and life.</p> <p>They reject any notion that science, personal experience, tradition, or other human endeavors have equal footing with the Bible, and maintain the Bible must have final authority in matters of faith/practice.</p> <p>Congregations have significant latitude in shaping ministry in their local setting as they are viewed as the primary expression of the church. The LCMC generally does not speak for its members.</p> <p>However, in circumstances where the truth of God's Word is being consistently challenged, the LCMC may decide to speak to the issue (e.g., Sexuality).</p>	<p>Believe in the Holy Bible as the complete written Word of God, preserved to us by the Holy Spirit for our salvation and instruction.</p> <p>The Bible is the only authentic and infallible source of God's revelation to us and all men, and is the only inerrant and completely adequate source and norm of Christian doctrine and life.</p> <p>The Bible, as a whole and in all its parts, is the Word of God under all circumstances regardless of man's attitude toward it.</p>

	ELCA <i>Evangelical Lutheran Church in America</i>	LCMC <i>Lutheran Congregations in Missions for Christ</i>	AFLC <i>Association of Free Lutheran Congregations</i>
Identity			
Overall Identity		<p>LCMC is a free standing synod created in August, 1999 in reaction to what was viewed as the ELCA's violation of the Lutheran Confessions. They are affiliated with the renewal group WordAlone and loosely affiliated with Lutheran CORE.</p> <p>Currently LCMC consists of a 239 congregations in 9 countries. Growth has been rapid in recent months as congregations react to the ELCA statement on human sexuality and ministry guidelines.</p>	<p>The AFLC is a venture of faith. It is an attempt to build an effective and orderly Christian fellowship with a minimum of human organization, and is an experiment in extreme ecclesiastical democracy and decentralization.</p> <p>A free congregation selects and calls its own pastors, conducts its own program of worship, fellowship and service and owns and maintains its own property.</p> <p>Currently AFLC consists of 270 congregations.</p>
Marketing/Promotion	Very wide array of service including: ELCA & Metro synod websites, county-wide resource centers, TV/video productions, radio ministry, TV ads, The Lutheran newsletter, ELCA news service, and more.	Marketing includes website, social media, newsletters, etc. Some printed materials, most available via the LCMC website, which is straightforward and easy to navigate.	Marketing includes primarily newsletters, brochures and pamphlets.
Logo/Signage	 <p>Evangelical Lutheran Church in America God's work. Our hands.</p> <p>While there is no formal requirement to use ELCA logo and/or signage, ELCA member congregations are requested to use the ELCA brand mark for consistency and effectiveness.</p>	 <p>No requirement to use LCMC logo and/or signage.</p>	 <p>AFLC Association of Free Lutheran Congregations</p> <p>No requirement to use AFLC logo and/or signage.</p>
Outreach/Ministries/ Evangelism (e.g. Missionaries)	<p>Many connections with Lutheran, ecumenical and interfaith organizations, such as Lutheran World Relief and Lutheran Disaster Response.</p> <p>Full communion relationships with 6 other churches.</p> <p>Many campus ministries, outdoor ministries and social service agencies across the country.</p> <p>The ELCA establishes mission congregations.</p>	<p>Mission churches and missionaries are supported directly through benevolence giving of the member congregations. Church plants both at home and abroad are also supported. Congregations deal directly with the missionaries and mission churches. Local outreach and evangelism is determined by the congregation.</p> <p>Also sponsor a group called LCMC-Lutheran Men, which every man in an LCMC congregation is urged to join.</p> <p>The Mission Loan Fund is used to provide interest-free loans to congregations.</p>	<p>The following entities/facets focus on Outreach:</p> <p>AFLC Commission on Evangelism, Parish builders, World Missions Committee, Free Lutheran Association of Pilot Supporters, Women's Missionary Federation, Home Mission, World Mission, Youth Ministries, Free Lutheran Youth Convention, magazines and publications, downloads, FLY Boot Camp, Gideon's Plan, College Ministry, "The Lutheran Ambassador", Association Retreat Center</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">ELCA <i>Evangelical Lutheran Church in America</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">LCMC <i>Lutheran Congregations in Missions for Christ</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">AFLC <i>Association of Free Lutheran Congregations</i></p>
Other		
<p><u>ELCA Social Statement</u> Recently, the ELCA adopted their social statement by two-thirds vote. This document builds on the key Lutheran principles of justification by grace and Christian freedom to serve the neighbor, and emphasizes that relative to human sexuality, building/ protection of trust is central to relationships. It affirms that we are called to be trustworthy in our human sexuality and to build C44 institutions and practices in which trust and trustworthy relationships can thrive.</p> <p>The social statement addresses marriage, same-gender relationships, families, commitment, social responsibility and moral discernment.</p> <p><u>Bound Conscience</u> As evident in Reformation writings, the concept of bound conscience plays an important part in Lutheran ethics and pastoral care, and was often raised by Luther in his teachings.</p> <p>Bound conscience describes those who, after careful reflection/discussion, hold a position on pastoral and ethical concern because they are convinced of it by understandings of Scripture/tradition, and see it as inextricably linked with faithful living. It emphasizes the i</p> <p>The idea of bound-conscience is central to the ELCA's p</p>	<p>The LCMC believes the Bible as the inspired Word of God and the sole authoritative source of their proclamation, faith and life.</p> <p>They reject any notion that science, personal experience, tradition, or other human endeavors have equal footing with the Bible, and maintain the Bible must have final authority in matters of faith/practice.</p> <p>Congregations have significant latitude in shaping ministry in their local setting as they are viewed as the primary expression of the church. The LCMC generally does not speak for its members.</p> <p>However, in circumstances where the truth of God's Word is being consistently challenged, the LCMC may decide to speak to the issue (e.g., Sexuality).</p>	

Exhibit C - Other Lutheran Synods for Consideration

As of October 15, 2009

Possible GLC Fit	Abbreviation	Name	Comments/Rationale for Aligning or Not Aligning
No	AALC	American Association of Lutheran Churches	Do not allow ordination of women into ministry. Other than that, looks worth investigating.
No	ACLCL	Association of Confessional Lutheran Churches	In formation. Latest update was late 2008, and website is marked as "Under Construction". Not enough information to assess.
No	ALCA	Apostolic Lutheran Church of America	Southern Finnish heritage. Heavy emphasis on dramatic conversion experience. King James based Bible.
TBD	AFLC	Association of Free Lutheran Congregations	Please reference more detailed writeup
No	ALCC	Anglo-Lutheran Catholic Church	Recognizes seven sacraments (vs. two) and celebrates them using the rites of the Roman Catholic Church.
No	ARC	Alliance of Renewal Churches	Highly charismatic. Far outside GLC comfort zone.
No	CALC	Canadian Association of Lutheran Congregations	For Canadian churches only. US excluded.
No	CLA	Conservative Lutheran Association	May no longer be in existence. All web pages can no longer be found.
No	CLBA	Church of the Lutheran Bretheren of America	Does not allow ordination of women. Interesting website with good whitepapers on key current issues. First communion coincides with Confirmation; 5th grade considered too early.
No	CLC	Church of the Lutheran Confession	Extremely conservative (beyond LCMS, WELS). Does not allow ordination of women.
No	CLC	Concordia Lutheran Conference	Women cannot preach, teach or speak publicly.
No		Eielsen Synod	No longer in existence. In 2007, final remaining church became independent.
No	ELCIC	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada	Limited to Canada
No	ELCM	Evangelical Lutheran Conference and Ministerium of North America	Affiliation very open to wide span/range of theologies. Hard to glean primary beliefs/principles.
No	ELDoNA	Evangelical Lutheran Diocese of North America	Group of 15 pastors with a single presiding bishop. Didn't come across as a synod to affiliate with.
No	ELF	Evangelical Lutheran Federation	6 congregations/only 500 members. Very conservative.
No	ELS	Evangelical Lutheran Synod	No women in ministry, closed communion
No	EELK	Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church	Ethnic grouping for Estonians
No	GCEPC	Lutheran Evangelical Protestant Church	URLs no longer work. Not sure if in existence anymore.
No	ILC	Illinois Lutheran Conference	Closed communion offered no more than once per month.
No	ILF	International Lutheran Fellowship	3 congregations/300 members. Very little information to be found.
No	LELCA	Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	Ethnic grouping of Latvians.
No	LCC	Lutheran Church Canada	Limited to Canada
No	LCCF	Lutheran Conference of Confessional Worship	Seems to no longer be in existence.
TBD	LCMC	Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ	Please reference more detailed writeup
No	LCMS	Lutheran Church Missouri Synod	No women in ministry, closed communion
No	LMS-USA	Lutheran Ministerium Synod - USA	No women in ministry or church leadership positions.
No	OLCC	Orthodox Lutheran Confessional Conference	Eventually disbanded, but spawned the Concordia Lutheran Conference.
No	ULMA	United Lutheran Mission Association	Purpose is to start up mission congregations from ground zero.
No	WELS	Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod	No women in ministry, closed communion
No	WCLA	World Confessional Lutheran Association	Renamed Conservative Lutheran Association. No longer exists.

Exhibit D - Independent Congregations *(formerly mainstream)*

The basic approach involved in researching this issue involved many hours of perusing web sites, following up on good leads, speaking to a couple of pastors over the phone, and exchanging e-mails with a couple of pastors who were willing to do so. It should be stressed that this trend data comes from limited sources. Any conclusions from this information should take that into consideration.

The research points to an interesting trend: there are very few truly independent churches. We were able to track down four distinct examples: First United Lutheran Church (San Francisco), St. Francis Lutheran Church (San Francisco), St. James Lutheran Church (West St. Paul, MN), and Grace Lutheran Church (River Forest). After separating from larger church organizations, these smaller entities did not remain organizations unto themselves. They all looked to affiliate with a larger church body. The relationship may not have been as defined, structured, or subordinate as it was to the former synod, but they clearly wanted to be part of some structure larger than themselves. First United and St. Francis associated with Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries. St. James maintains ties with and receives limited pastoral support from the Missouri Synod. Grace Lutheran's pastors are all ELCA rostered; they maintain contact with both the ELCA and Missouri Synod as well as using a non-profit church consulting group. All of these current pastors saw one of the strongest negatives about being independent as a struggle to avoid being "an island," a "lone ranger," to having "a disconnect with wider Lutheran agencies and minist

Several churches addressed the financial impact of independence on building ownership. First United's separation gave them freedom to sell their building and become a "church without walls" ; it allowed them to create and utilize their own endowment fund. Grace Lutheran entered into years of litigation with Missouri Synod, the end result being that they cannot affiliate with another church body until 2027 (despite their desire to do so); otherwise they forfeit their building. All these churches found that giving levels improved with independence. Pastoral compensation remained intact and reflective of the current marketplace.

Resources for liturgy and education seemed to be readily available; they were not dependent upon the former synod for these things.

There did not seem to be substantive changes in governance and theology. It appears that (except for the issues that prompted separation) the core of beliefs/practices they held prior to independence remained. Reportedly there seemed to be a stronger ownership of ministries and involvement by church members when they separated. Several churches found the independence really empowered their benevolence committees and made their plans much more intentional.

Exhibit G - Key Contacts

	Contact Name		Phone	E-Mail Address
AFLC	Karen Floan, Admin Assistant	AFLC Staff	763-545-5631	kmfloan@aflc.org
	President Elden Nelson	AFLC President	Not available	president@aflc.org
CORE	Rev. Steven Paul Tibbetts, STS	Zion Ev. Lutheran Church, Peoria, IL	309-637-9150	zion.elca.peoria@ecunet.org
	Rev. Dr. Jeffray Greene	American Lutheran Church, Rantoul, IL	217-893-4550	prGreene@alc-rantoul.org
	Rev. Dr. Frederick Baltz	St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, Galena, IL	815-777-1134	stmattlc@sbcglobal.net
	Rev. Ken Kimball	Old West Paint Creek Luth Church, Waukon, IA	563-535-7698	pastrken@acegroup.cc
ELCA	Bishop Wayne Miller	Bishop Metropolitan Chicago Synod	773-248-0021 ext. 25	www.elca.org
	Jeff Drake	Associate to the Bishop	773-248-0021 ext. 16	jdrake@mcselca.org
	Cynthia Hileman	Metropolitan Chicago Synod Staff	773-248-0021	ckhileman@mcselca.org
LCMC	April Dietz, Associate Pastor	Lutheran Church of the Master	402-333-4444	april.dietz@churchofthemaster.com
	President Nick Henseler	Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Davenport, IA	563-391-4519	pastornick@princeofpeaceqc.org
	William Sullivan	LCMC Service Coordinator	866-720-5262	wtsullivan@sbcglobal.net