

WOMEN AND JUSTICE: ONE IN CHRIST TASK FORCE

KEY TERMS

ELCA social statements are teaching and policy documents that provide broad frameworks to assist in thinking about and discussing social issues in the context of faith and life. Social statements also set policy for the ELCA and guide its advocacy and work as a publically engaged church.

Social messages of the ELCA are topical documents adopted by the ELCA Church Council to focus attention and action on timely, pressing matters of social concern to the church and society. Generally, they build upon previously adopted teaching and policy positions, especially from social statements.

A Draft of a Social Statement on Women and Justice will be exactly that, a draft of a social statement designed for feedback from church members. It has no official standing but allows the task force to provide a working document for feedback from throughout the church.

ELCA SOCIAL STATEMENTS:

- *Abortion / Aborto (1991)*
- *Caring for creation / Medio ambiente (1993)*
- *Church in society / Iglesia en la sociedad (1991)*
- *The church and criminal justice / La iglesia y la justicia penal (2013)*
- *The death penalty / Pena de Muerte (1991)*
- *Economic life / Vida economica (1999)*
- *Education / Educación (2007)*
- *Genetics (2011)*
- *Health and health care / Salud y asistencia sanitaria (2003)*
- *Human sexuality / La sexualidad humana (2009)*
- *Peace / Por la paz (1995)*
- *Race, ethnicity and culture / Raza, etnicidad y cultura (1993)*

See more at:

<http://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements#sthash.bXkkQ9en.dpuf>

IN PREPARATION FOR THE SOCIAL STATEMENT DRAFT

- **Listening events** were occasions led by task force members, or a group of people called Process Builders, designed to hear from members of the ELCA regarding their insights and concerns around the issues of women and justice in church and society. It provided early feedback for the task force about hopes, fears and expectations for the social statement the task force will develop. The events were local or online in nature.
- **Resources and study documents** have been approved during the development process of the social statement. They were created to help members of the ELCA study and think about issues under discussion. Most of these are brief, one-to-three session guides focusing on a specific topic. For example, one task force study explores how women are portrayed in the media. They are listed in the resources section below.
- **A full study, *Faith, Sexism, Justice: Conversations Toward a Social Statement***, has been created by the task force and is a longer and more comprehensive resource containing sustained themes while looking at key topics.

SOCIAL STATEMENT TIMELINE

2009	August	Churchwide Assembly authorized development of a social statement on women and justice.
2012		Task Force members selected, met for first time in September
2013 – 2015		Listening Events held, study materials and resources published
2013	August	Progress reported to ELCA Churchwide Assembly
2015	October	Task Force began work on creation of a full study
	November	Social Message on Gender-based Violence considered by ELCA Church Council
2016	April	Task Force finalized study
	June	Full study published, response period begins throughout ELCA through June 15, 2017
	August	Progress reported to Churchwide Assembly
2017	February	Task Force meets to discuss responses and start work on social statement draft
	June 15	Study response period ends
	September	Task Force finalizes draft of a Social Statement on Women and Justice
	October	Draft of a Social Statement published and mailed to each congregation
	Fall	Comment and synodical hearings on Draft begin for 12 months
2018	October 30	Comment and synodical hearings end
2019	January	Task Force finalizes proposed Social Statement, meets for final time
	February	Proposed Social Statement published online
		Reviewed by Conference of Bishops
	April	ELCA Church Council recommends text to Churchwide Assembly
	August	Churchwide Assembly considers statement for adoption
	September	Official text posted online
	December	Social Statement published in paper format
2020	Winter	Spanish translation published
2021	Winter	Study guide to statement published

RESOURCES

Resources approved and provided by the Task Force:

- Seeking Understanding: Some Issues in Biblical Interpretation Regarding Women and Justice
- "Miss Representation" Discussion Guide
- "A Path Appears" Discussion Guide
- Human Trafficking Curriculum Series

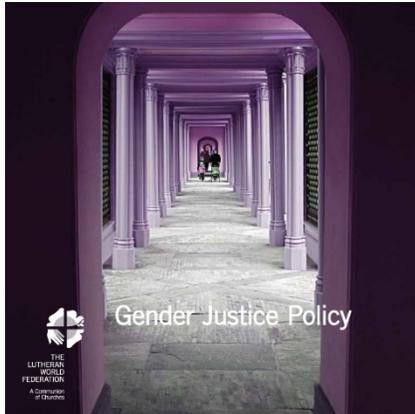
Additional links and resources:

- Justice for Women page on the ELCA web site: <http://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Publicly-Engaged-Church/Justice-for-Women>
- Task force link: <http://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Current-Social-Writing-Projects/Women-and-Justice>
- Lutheran World Federation Gender Justice Policy: <https://www.lutheranworld.org/content/resource-lwf-gender-justice-policy>
- Articles in *Living Lutheran and Gather, Interchange*
- Women of the ELCA resources: *Stand up for Justice, Understanding and Responding to Human Trafficking, observances of Rachel's Day, A Day Full of Light, Raising Up Healthy Women and Children, Planting Seeds for a Healthy Tomorrow, Our Journey to Wellness*, and Seed grants opportunities (all available at <http://www.womenoftheelca.org/resources-pages-5.php>)

RESOURCE DETAILS

Lutheran World Federation Gender Justice Policy

<https://www.lutheranworld.org/content/resource-lwf-gender-justice-policy>



The LWF Gender Justice Policy lays out a biblically-rooted framework for the Lutheran global communion of churches to take concrete steps to implement gender justice, adapting action plans to different contextual realities.

The policy document is divided into two parts:

- Gender Justice Policy Principles
- Gender Justice Methodology

The ten principles express the LWF communion's core affirmations with regard to gender justice.

The methodology provides tools for the implementation of the gender justice principles that can be adapted to local contexts by LWF member churches and regional expressions.

This LWF Gender Justice Policy, approved by the LWF Council in 2013, is a tool to enhance the communion's journey towards inclusiveness. Developed in a participatory process, it has grown out of experiences in member churches, is enriched by the biblical and theological bases of our Lutheran identity, and provides guidance and methodologies for contextualizing action plans and strategies in the regions and integrating gender as a crosscutting priority in all of the communion's work.

Social Messages

Social messages of the ELCA are topical documents adopted by the ELCA Church Council to focus attention and action on timely, pressing matters of social concern to the church and society. They are used to address pressing contemporary concerns in light of the prophetic and compassionate traditions of Scripture and do not establish new teaching or policy. Rather, they build upon previously adopted teaching and policy positions, especially from social statements.

These messages draw attention to specific topics or social concerns that arise from our participation in God's work in the world, and they encourage moral discernment, thoughtful discussion and action. Each message is reviewed by the Conference of Bishops and adopted by the ELCA Church Council, and expresses the convictions of the leadership of this church.

Social Message on Gender-based Violence

The social message on "Gender-based Violence" seeks to raise awareness about the growing level of gender-based violence in U.S. Society. "Gender-based violence" includes, but is not limited to, rape, sexual abuse, physical and sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, and sexual harassment. The message was developed in light of existing ELCA social teaching documents such as statements on race, ethnicity, and culture and sexuality; the message on commercial sexual exploitation and the policy resolution on domestic violence. You can read or download the full social message on "Gender-based Violence" and "Gender-based Violence Documentation." This social message was adopted in 2015 by the Church Council of the ELCA.

<http://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Messages/Gender-Violence>

The following resources may be found at <http://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Current-Social-Writing-Projects/Women-and-Justice/resources> ELCA staff and the Women and Justice: One in Christ Task Force have created these resources. All include devotions, prayers, and discussion questions.

Seeking Understanding: Some Issues in Biblical Interpretation Regarding Women and Justice

This study invites you into conversation around how the Bible can be faithfully utilized in a discussion of women and justice today. The three-session resource relies on the four-fold method for interpretation of Scripture used by the [Book of Faith Initiative](#). It encourages participants to engage with both liberating and problematic texts. The leader's guides, participant handouts, and supplemental resources can be downloaded from the links above.

"Miss Representation" Discussion Guide



"Miss Representation" unpacks how the media objectifies women and examines the effect of this powerful medium on young men and women growing up. Using interviews of young people, as well as public figures such as Condoleezza Rice, Katie Couric, Rachel Maddow, Cory Booker and Gloria Steinem, the film explores the depiction of women in mass media and questions its relation to female leadership in areas such as the film industry and government. This can be downloaded in three versions: four sessions, three slightly longer sessions, or one 3-hour session. Each option is appropriate for a variety of church groups, including youth groups and men's groups! The DVD is available through some local libraries, can be ordered through iTunes or online, viewed on Netflix or borrowed from your synod's resource center.

"A Path Appears" Discussion Guide

Pulitzer Prize-winning journalists and authors Sheryl WuDunn and Nicholas Kristof sought out stories of gender-based oppression and stories of hope for women and girls from the United States and around the world. "A Path Appears," a film in three episodes, presents the stories of victims and survivors of gender-based inequalities and violations of human rights as the realities of our world. However, the film also shows solutions that target the root of the problems in order to empower women. The movie (and book) are available at some libraries. The DVD can be purchased online from Amazon or rented through Netflix. It is also available for streaming through AmazonPrime or iTunes. (**Trigger warning:** This documentary and the discussion guide contain information and references to sexual assault and violence that may be triggering to survivors.)



Human Trafficking Curriculum Series

Human trafficking, the second largest and fastest growing illegal trade in the world, is modern-day slavery wherein people are in bondage through fraud, force or coercion. According to the U.S. Department of State and the Free the Slaves organization, between 12.3 and 27 million people are trafficked worldwide at any time. That's approximately the total population (27 million) of Texas and Louisiana. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes estimates the total revenue of human trafficking to be \$32 billion. That's roughly the gross domestic product of Guatemala. Human trafficking is currently the second most profitable illegal trade, just behind drug trafficking. Within this vast trade in human lives, women and girls account for 70 to 80 percent of all humans trafficked worldwide. Therefore, the ELCA not only attends to ending human trafficking and caring for survivors, it also addresses root causes of trafficking, such as poverty, hunger and sexism. This series provides six one-hour sessions that educate beginners on the facts of human trafficking and how we as Lutherans can respond to the call to affect change in the systems that allow human trafficking to continue.