

These statements are not based on our local church family, including PMA [REDACTED], but rather the happenings and actions of the ELCA itself and its leadership. Since beginning attendance in 2016 we have found the people and leadership of [REDACTED] Church to be welcoming and based in Biblical actions.

Based on the facts that I have gathered through research and discussion I believe the ELCA is not acting in accordance with the Bible in, at minimum, the following areas:
(no particular order) (all scripture is quoted using New International Version)

–Disregards the God intended family structure by promoting other relationship lifestyles.

Genesis 2:24 “That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.”

Genesis 1:27 “So God created man in his own image, in the image of god he created him; male and female he created them.”

Ephesians 5:31 “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”

The ELCA has openly allowed gay and lesbian pastors and other professional workers living in committed relationships since a vote at the national assembly in 2009. At that same assembly they additionally approved a resolution committing the church to find ways for congregations that choose to do so to "recognize, support and hold publicly accountable life-long, monogamous, same gender relationships," though the resolution did not use the word "marriage."¹

In the past 6 months the ELCA has elected its first openly transgender bishop. During this ceremony Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton referred to the Trinity as “Parent, Child, and Holy Breath”² in an attempt to maintain non-gender specific. This goes against the many, many times the Bible refers to the Trinity as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

ELCA member churches have allowed transgender pastors and bishops in leadership positions; therefore, allowing people that are continually choosing to live in sin to influence their congregations. In one example a gay ELCA pastor (Pastor Jennie Chrien) proclaimed on social media, “The Holy Family is queer”. Not only did the post not receive reprimand from their local Synod, but rather was laughed at with an “lol” by the Bishop of that Synod (Bishop Brenda Bos). Separately, in a video that can be found here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OKDJGuS25n8> a transgender ELCA pastor states “The communion of the queer-making Spirit be with you all” and “The grace of Jesus the Christ, the love of God the Creator, and the communion of the queer-making Spirit be with you all.” The creed in this service states “I believe in Jesus Christ, Sophia, the Word”. “Sophia” is a feminine image for God that feminists use to worship the “Divine Feminine.” Along the same line, God is referred to in the service as “The Divine Seamstress”. The first article in the “Living Lutheran” magazine, October 2021 edition, refers to the Holy Spirit as ‘her’.³

Deuteronomy 22:5 says, “A woman must not wear men’s clothing, nor a man wear women’s clothing, for the Lord your God detests anyone that does this.” This past August Rev. Nadia Bolz-Weber was installed as the ELCA pastor of public witness. Rev. Bolz-Weber has a

¹ <https://www.elca.org/News-and-Events/6587>

² <https://anglican.ink/2021/09/17/a-new-thing-is-happening-hails-transgender-lutheran-bishop/>

³ <https://pubs.royle.com/publication/?m=62112&i=720713&p=6&ver=html5>

great history of including people in drag into her ministry⁴ both as a local pastor and in her new role. Rev. Bolz-Weber also spoke at the 2018 ELCA National Convention and lead 31,000 youth to proclaim “I renounce the lie that queerness is anything other than beauty” (minute 22).⁵

The ELCA promotes and celebrates the LGBTQIA+ community and same sex marriage through a dedicated webpage on their main ELCA site⁶. This page contains resources on how to conduct same sex marriages, how to share ministry with same sex couples, and various other resources.

Lastly, in addition to the bible verses provided, Martin Luther warned us of this type of behavior from church leaders in the 55th point of his Sermon for Christmas Day (Wartburg Church Postil) where he said,⁷ “There is no more terrible plague, misfortune or cause for distress upon earth than a preacher who does not preach God's Word; of whom, alas, the world today is full; and yet they think they are pious and do good when indeed their whole work is nothing but murdering souls, blaspheming God and setting up idolatry, so that it would be much better for them if they were robbers, murderers, and the worst scoundrels, for then they would know that they are doing wickedly. But now they go along under spiritual names and show, as priest, bishop, pope, and are at the same time ravening wolves in sheeps' clothing, and it would be well if no one ever heard their preaching.”

–The ELCA not only does not protect the unborn, but rather, helps to promote options for abortion.

Psalm 139: 13 “For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb”

Genesis 9:6 “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man.”

Exodus 20:13 “You shall not murder”

At the Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA in 1991 the church adopted the Social Statement on Abortion where they state, “This church recognizes that there can be sound reasons for ending a pregnancy through induced abortion” and even at one point calls abortion a “morally responsible decision”⁸. The above Bible verses seem to argue against their being “sound reasons”.

The health insurance that is provided through the ELCA and its health insurance company, Portico, pays for abortions for those covered under their plans for any reason. At the 1997 churchwide ELCA convention there was a vote that would have limited the plan's ability to pay for abortions that failed by a vote of 651 to 271.⁹

In the 2020 ELCA Expense Proposal by Major Purpose there is \$10,810,044 earmarked to “Support and develop current and future leaders in the ELCA”.¹⁰ Under this category is “supporting the work of ELCA seminaries, colleges and universities”. At this time there are at least 14 ELCA colleges and universities that list Planned Parenthood as a resource on their websites. The options as a resource range from using Planned Parenthood as a

⁴ <https://www.nadiabolz-weber.com/home/category/drag-queen>

⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YBtyZbauH0g>

⁶ <https://www.elca.org/lgbtq>

⁷ http://www.trinitylutheranms.org/MartinLuther/MLSermons/Luke2_1_14.html

⁸ https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/AbortionSS.pdf?_ga=2.87121243.2117834256.1641756783-1546502705.1641756783

⁹ <https://www.elca.org/News-and-Events/2952>

¹⁰ https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Budget_Proposal_2020-2022.pdf

sexual/reproductive health resource, to internship possibilities, to promoting it as an emergency contraception resource.¹¹

According to the 2020 Planned Parenthood annual report the organization performed 354,871 abortions during the reporting period, as well as, provided 584,003 emergency contraception kits.¹²

–The ELCA and the Central States Synod believes that all white Lutherans have caused harm through racism and we should work for reconciliation and restoration for those harms. To show our acceptance of all we should accept all religions.

Romans 3:22-24 “This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.”
John 14:6 “Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me”

Locally, at the 2021 Central States Synod assembly there was passed a “Racial Justice Resolution”.¹³ This is to stay inline with the Churchwide Assembly CA16.05.22 Resolution on Racial Justice. This CSS document makes these claims at the very beginning, “Lutherans have inherited advantages and benefits from the systems of discrimination and segregation that have reinforced racism in our society”. This statement claims that we all, as white Lutherans, have had things given to us due to the system we’ve grown up in; and not due to our own work. The ELCA has gone so far as to make us pray for forgiveness for our own racial sins. In the bulletin prayers from December 19, 2021, we were asked to pray the prayer “we fear those different from ourselves”.

The ELCA website contains a link supporting the Black Lives Matter movement.¹⁴ This movement, amongst other things, describes capitalism as “white-supremacist-capitalism” and encourages supporting only black owned and led services and organizations. They also “affirm the lives of Black queer and trans folks, disabled folks, undocumented folks, folks with records, women, and all Black lives along the gender spectrum” which, again, goes against what the Bible has written about the creation of men, women, and God intended family structures. The ELCA’s support of the BLM group does not help to bring people together, but rather, continues to divide the country and world by race and supports non-Bible centered sexuality.

In 2019 the ELCA passed “A Declaration of Inter-Religious Commitment”¹⁵ which is inconsistent with scripture as this declaration uses a universal approach to faith. The Bible, as quoted above, says that there is only one God and only one way to him. To further support all other religions, prior to this declaration, Bishop Eaton proclaimed that “there may be (a hell), but

¹¹<https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:0ba308d6-34d0-4866-a73c-cb1a7c3c8f49#pageNum=1>

¹²https://www.plannedparenthood.org/uploads/filer_public/67/30/67305ea1-8da2-4cee-9191-19228c1d6f70/210219-annual-report-2019-2020-web-final.pdf

¹³https://a977a81c-743b-4656-a4b7-c5d6d569b61c.filesusr.com/ugd/ed9008_32b8ffd0fd3743e2960d80271c60ff5a.pdf

¹⁴ <https://www.elca.org/blacklivesmatter>

¹⁵https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Inter-Religious_Policy_Statement.pdf?_ga=2.63148524.2117834256.1641756783-1546502705.1641756783

it's probably empty".¹⁶ This is contradictory to Revelation 21:8 "But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death".

Additional thoughts:

#1—The ELCA, through Bishop Eaton, has made many statements that I feel try and divide our country and assembly by taking a political side. In response to the happenings of Jan. 6, 2021, she signed a letter to VP Mike Pence stating "not only those who invaded the Capitol (need to be held accountable), but also those who supported and/or promoted the President's false claims about the election or made their own false accusations." This letter also called for the removal of then President Trump by her and her group days following the events before any investigating had begun. Additionally, she took it upon herself to issue judgment on the jury decision on this past fall's Kyle Rittenhouse trial. In her pastoral message she said, "When a child is allowed to become a vigilante without recourse, we are forced to confront the idols of our society: guns, violence and white supremacy."¹⁷

#2—The Central States Synod proposed budget for 2020 budgeted \$817,500 for "ELCA Churchwide Ministry" (\$825,000 in 2019).¹⁸ This means over 50% of their budget that is raised locally is going towards the national ELCA for their use. Unfortunately, as I've pointed out, the ELCA isn't using the money towards biblical principles. They are utilizing our local dollars to pay for transgender clergy needs, abortions for ELCA health insurance members, and supporting Planned Parenthood through various activities. As christians we are called to tithe (first 10%) to God and his church many times in the Bible. However, when our tithing is going to non-biblical actions are we truly tithing?

#3—Page 326 of the Summary of Congregational Statistics¹⁹ states that at the end of 2020 the ELCA was down 122,804. It also states that they lost 78 congregations.

¹⁶ <https://www.christiantimes.com/news/top-lutheran-bishop-says-there-may-be-a-hell-but-it-is-empty.html>

¹⁷ <https://www.elca.org/News-and-Events/8125>

¹⁸ https://a977a81c-743b-4656-a4b7-c5d6d569b61c.filesusr.com/ugd/ed9008_5947feea08454d6e88260ac6cec098a8.pdf

¹⁹ https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Summary_of_Congregational_Statistics_a_s_of_12-31-2020.pdf