

## **ELCA REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT TO THE UALC CHURCH COUNCIL**

**March 25, 2010**

### **REVIEW COMMITTEE PROCESS**

At the September 15, 2009, UALC Church Council meeting, the following motion was unanimously passed.

- a. Council believes that the ELCA Churchwide Assembly consciously disregarded the authority of the Bible when it moved toward permitting practicing homosexuals to be active clergy.
- b. Council believes that it should begin a process that it expects will lead to a Council recommendation that the congregation terminate its relationship with the ELCA and join another Lutheran body or become an independent Lutheran congregation.
- c. Due to the complexities of the relationship with the ELCA and the diversity within our congregation, Council believes that it should form an ELCA Review Committee to
  - develop and recommend to Council a plan for the congregation to terminate its relationship with the ELCA, including a recommendation for affiliation with another Lutheran body;
  - consider whether there is any reason that the Lord Jesus may want the congregation to remain in the ELCA;
  - provide information to, and have meetings with, the congregation to inform them and solicit and consider input from the congregation, regarding our relationship with the ELCA;
  - make its final recommendation to Council within six months with an interim report due in three months – these reports also will be shared in congregational information sessions.
- d. Council chair is to select the Committee members subject to Council ratification at Council's October business meeting.

This motion led to the creation of the ELCA Review Committee consisting of Loren Geistfeld, Chair; Charlie Aldag; Carolyn Denner; Nancy Gillette; Paul Nordman; Charlie Oellermann; and Paul Ullring. The composition of the committee was approved by the Church Council on October 20, 2009. The committee met most weeks between mid-October 2009 and late-March 2010.

Town Hall meetings held November 9, 10, and 12, 2009, provided an opportunity for more than 250 members of the congregation to share their thoughts and concerns. These meetings, when combined with e-mail messages, telephone conversations, personal conversations and letters, provided important input from the congregation.

The committee also sought input from recognized ELCA leaders beyond UALC. Bishop Emeritus Sauer (November 12, 2009) and Bishop Holloway (January 28, 2010) of the ELCA's Southern Ohio Synod met with the committee.

The amount of written material on all sides of the issues is extensive. A significant amount of this information was reviewed and studied by the committee. Some of this material was made available on the UALC website.

Committee members assembled information on five Lutheran groups: American Association of Lutheran Churches, Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, Church of the Lutheran Brethren of America, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, and Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ. The primary sources of information were organization websites and items found on the internet. This information provided a basis for committee discussion on affiliation with other Lutheran groups. There was also extensive review of information from the Lutheran CORE website, along with information provided by Paul Uring in his role as a member of its steering committee.

Bill Sullivan from Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC) met with the committee on February 4, 2010. Even though UALC has been affiliated with this group since 2001, the committee believed it important to develop a clearer understanding of where the LCMC is heading.

Two committee members visited with Pastor Stolzenburg of Emmanuel Lutheran Church (located in Merion Village in south Columbus) on December 31, 2009.

Emmanuel is an independent Lutheran congregation. This discussion provided valuable input as to the advantages and disadvantages of being independent.

Information related to Grace Lutheran Church, River Forest, IL, another independent Lutheran Congregation, was gathered from its website.

The committee met with UALC worship community leaders on February 23, 2010. This meeting provided a perspective from the various worship communities, as well as that of the community leaders.

Notices were placed in the *Cornerstone* on October 25 and November 1, 8, 15 and 29, 2009. Reports were on the back page of the *Cornerstone* November 22 and December 20, 2009, and February 7, 2010. The committee made a progress report to the UALC Church Council on February 20, 2010. The final report was submitted to the UALC Church Council late-March 2010.

## **UALC: BELIEFS AND MISSION**

A guiding principle underlying the committee's deliberations was that whatever is done must be in the best interest of the life and mission of UALC. In this context the committee based its work on the presumption that the beliefs and mission of UALC were major factors affecting any decision. Two statements describing UALC's historical focus and mission are: (1) "everyone a minister" and (2) "to be and make disciples".

UALC exists for God and the people He loves – those already here and those with whom He will bring us into contact. The UALC Vision<sup>1</sup> focuses on four elements:

**GROW UP Strong in God's Word**

Accepting Jesus Christ as our Savior is essential to salvation, but it is just the beginning of our journey, not our final destination. We must continually grow toward Christ's image by living faithfully in God's word and truth every day. Read 2 Timothy 2:15.

**BUILD UP Our Communities**

What does a vital community look like? Read Acts 2:42-47. Communities don't become vital; people do. When each person is alive with the Holy Spirit, a community is vital!

**REACH OUT in Global Mission**

Missions are a big part of who we've always been. It is clearer than ever that God wants us to make foreign, global and multicultural missions a major piece of our life. That's why it is one of the Directions of His Vision for our church and for each of us as individuals. Read 1 Corinthians 2:9.

**BRANCH OUT Locally**

We are being called to begin ministry in neighborhoods beyond our present three campuses. The future looks different. It may be very surprising to learn what, when, how and who God has in mind! Let's be ready together. Read Jeremiah 29:11.

The context for UALC's mission is what it believes. This is stated in Article II of the UALC constitution<sup>2</sup>, Confession of Faith, "[t]his congregation accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the written Word of God and the authoritative and reliable source and norm of its proclamation, faith and life. Inspired by God's Spirit speaking through their authors, the Scriptures record and announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them God's Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world." This confession of faith is reinforced by UALC's belief statement (What We Believe<sup>3</sup>) which has been available and shared for nearly two decades. In this statement one notes that "[w]e believe and have experienced that the Bible is the living Word of God. In the pages of these 66 books, God reveals His character and will, we see our own sinful reflection, and we learn of God's offer of eternal life in Jesus Christ. The entire Bible is inspired by God and is the final authority in faith and life."

The ELCA Review Committee believes that the Biblically based UALC mission and beliefs provide the context in which decisions must be placed. Any decision regarding affiliation with the ELCA or another Lutheran church body, or to become an independent Lutheran congregation, must support and strengthen UALC in its mission.

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<sup>1</sup> The UALC Vision, <http://www.ualc.org/templates/System/details.asp?id=38787&PID=458466>

<sup>2</sup> The UALC Constitution, <http://www.ualc.org/clientimages/38787/pdfs/ualcconstitution083103.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> What We Believe, [http://www.ualc.org/clientimages/38787/pdfs/what\\_we\\_believe.pdf](http://www.ualc.org/clientimages/38787/pdfs/what_we_believe.pdf)

## HISTORY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN UALC AND THE ELCA

The following analogy is illustrative of the relationship between UALC and the ELCA over the 20+ year existence of the ELCA. The ideal would be for the track taken by UALC to be identical with the track taken by the ELCA; however, this clearly has not happened. A second-best scenario would be for the two tracks to be parallel; however, this has not happened either. What has happened is that the tracks, never being identical or parallel, have diverged over time. The distance between the tracks has become so great that new alternatives need to be considered since the ability of UALC to accomplish its mission is being compromised.

When, as a member of The American Lutheran Church (ALC), UALC voted on whether the ALC should merge with the Lutheran Church in America (LCA), the congregational vote in 1986 was “no”. However, since a majority of ALC congregations voted to approve the merger, the ELCA was created in 1988. It was at this time that UALC became part of the ELCA.

In 1994 a UALC study group prepared “A Biblical Approach to Human Sexuality” in response to the ELCA study “The Church and Human Sexuality: A Lutheran Perspective”.<sup>4</sup> In the UALC study the authors noted “[t]raditionally, the Lutheran Church has based its faith and life on the Scriptures and on confessions of faith, such as The Augsburg Confession (The Book of Concord), believing that the Bible is true and valid for directing and guiding our lives.” The authors noted that they “found some of the conclusions reached and the key methods used in the ELCA paper to be substantially at variance with historic Christianity.”

The 1999 ELCA Churchwide Assembly (CWA) passed the “Called to Common Mission” which required participation by ELCA bishops in the “historic episcopacy” and a loss of the freedom for ministerial candidates to choose who would ordain them. This led to creation of the WordAlone Network whose efforts contributed to a modification of “Called to Common Mission”<sup>5</sup> in 2001.

In 2001 UALC became a charter member of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC). Emerging from the WordAlone Network, LCMC is an association of congregations concerned about ELCA positions on theological issues.

In 2004 UALC voted to withhold its financial contributions to the Churchwide ELCA reflecting disenchantment with the directions being taken at the national level. However, UALC continued to support the Southern Ohio Synod of the ELCA.

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<sup>4</sup> A Biblical Approach to Human Sexuality: A Response by a UALC Study Group to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America Study, “The Church and Human Sexuality: A Lutheran Perspective”,

[http://www.ualc.org/clientimages/38787/pdfs/ualc\\_human\\_sexuality\\_study\\_1994.pdf](http://www.ualc.org/clientimages/38787/pdfs/ualc_human_sexuality_study_1994.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Ecumenical-and-Inter-Religious-Relations/Full-Communion/The-Episcopal-Church/Called-to-Common-Mission.aspx>

In 2007 many ELCA congregations and members were deeply conflicted by the ELCA initiative on Scripture and the Word of God: "Book of Faith: Lutherans Read the Bible." A statement prepared by the Lutheran CORE steering committee noted that "[a]s members of the ELCA, we are deeply concerned about the role and interpretation of the Bible within our church..."<sup>6</sup> An important aspect of the statement was the impossibility of a church united having multiple approaches to Biblical interpretation since "A house divided against itself cannot stand" (Mark 3:25) and "No one can serve two masters" (Matthew 6:24).

At the August 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly in Minneapolis several actions related to human sexuality were taken. The first was adoption of the "Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust" social statement.<sup>7</sup> This was followed by four resolutions implementing the social statement with one of the resolutions making it possible for those in committed same-gender relationships to serve as rostered clergy in the ELCA.<sup>8</sup> This led to a situation in which acts and behaviors that UALC believes are expressly condemned in the Scriptures are deemed to be acceptable by the ELCA.

In August 2009 UALC suspended contributions to the ELCA at all levels, including the Southern Ohio Synod.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

One part of the charge to the committee was to "consider whether there is any reason that the Lord Jesus may want the congregation to remain in the ELCA." Through a series of studies, interviews, and discussions, the committee concluded there are two basic reasons for remaining in the ELCA: (1) The ELCA provides international mission opportunities and (2) staying in the ELCA provides an opportunity to promote reform from within. The committee believes that neither reason is sufficient for UALC to remain in the ELCA. While the ELCA has extensive mission involvement in Sub-Saharan Africa, participating in and supporting these activities can occur without being in the ELCA. UALC has spent more than 20 years trying to reform the ELCA from within. These efforts have had no effect on the ELCA. Therefore, in the committee's judgment there is no reason why "the Lord Jesus may want the congregation to remain in the ELCA."

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<sup>6</sup> A Lutheran Statement on the Authority and Interpretation of Scripture, <http://wordalone.org/nr/Lutheran-statement-Scripture.shtml>

<sup>7</sup> Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust, A Social Statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, <http://www.ualc.org/clientimages/38787/pdfs/cwa2009revisedsocialstatementhsfinal090309.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Resolution 2: "Resolved, that the ELCA commit itself to finding a way for people in such publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships to serve as rostered leaders of this church." <http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Office-of-the-Presiding-Bishop/Messages-and-Statements/090822.aspx>

## Recommendation 1

The ELCA Review Committee recommends that UALC disaffiliate from the ELCA following the procedures outlined in the UALC Constitution. The UALC Church Council is encouraged to call a congregational meeting for the first vote during the second quarter of 2010.

Since the 1988 merger creating the ELCA, UALC has struggled with the unwillingness of the ELCA to submit to Biblical Authority. The ELCA has consistently engaged in behaviors inconsistent with its Statement of Faith (Appendix A), as well as with the confessions of the Lutheran church.<sup>9</sup> While relevant to the entire Protestant Reformation, Scripture alone (*sola scriptura*) was a focal point of the Lutheran Reformation. It was noted by Martin Luther that “[b]oth saintliness and learning are splendid and very high distinctions; but they are not sufficient for faith, which must rely on the Word of God alone.”<sup>10</sup>

The ELCA’s drift away from the authority of Scripture has manifested itself in ways beyond those noted above in the “History of the Relationship between UALC and the ELCA.” Bishop Emeritus Sauer noted that official publications of the denomination, including worship materials, have changed the names for the three persons of the Trinity—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—to Trinity which is not a name for God, but a name for a doctrine.<sup>11</sup> He also noted that the ELCA publication, “Book of Faith: Lutherans Read the Bible” questions Jesus’ absolute claims in Scripture which state that He is the exclusive pathway to salvation (*e.g.*, John 14:6). Bishop Emeritus Sauer also indicated that one consequence of the ELCA’s changing view of Scripture is that the doctrine of baptism has come to be regarded as a doctrine of inclusivity rather than a promise of forgiveness of sins.<sup>12</sup>

Much of the ELCA drift over the past decades can be explained by Gospel reductionism which essentially reduces the Bible to the Gospel. It grants Biblical authority only as related to the Gospel thereby allowing considerable freedom in matters which are not explicit to the Gospel. This makes the non-Gospel parts of the Bible relative, not having the same authority as the Gospel portion of the Bible.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Lutherans accept the three historical confessions (Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds) as do most Christian churches. However, Lutherans also accept the confessional statements contained in the *Book of Concord* as true and correct summaries of the Scriptures. Special emphasis is placed on the Unaltered Augsburg Confession which was presented to Charles V in 1530 as a confession of faith and is considered by many as a defining moment in the nascent Protestant Reformation.

<sup>10</sup> Luther, Martin; Pelikan, Jaroslav Jan (Hrsg.); Oswald, Hilton C. (Hrsg.); Lehmann, Helmut T. (Hrsg.): *Luther's Works, Vol. 3 : Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 15-20*. Saint Louis : Concordia Publishing House, 1999, c1961 (Luther's Works 3), S. 3:325

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, the Service of the Word on page 210 of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, where the opening line of the second invocation states “Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God”.

<sup>12</sup> Oral comment to UALC Church Council, February 20, 2010.

<sup>13</sup> The original term was law-gospel reductionism which emerged in the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod in the 1960s and 1970s. For a perspective on this approach to Biblical interpretation see <http://www.ctsfw.net/media/pdfs/murraymissourinthe1960s.pdf>

*Does one begin with the Gospel that leads to Scripture, or does one begin with Scripture that leads to the Gospel?*<sup>14</sup> Those espousing Gospel reductionism have taken the first approach. When taking this approach, everything outside the Gospel becomes a matter of theological indifference (an adiaphoron). This leads to a situation in which the focus is not what Scripture teaches but what the Gospel allows.

Under Gospel reductionism, the Gospel becomes the ethical regulating principle in the life of the Christian. Murder becomes a sin because it contradicts the Gospel and not because it infringes on the fifth commandment. In other words, since the Law no longer has power to condemn, the Gospel takes over the reproving function of the Law. In this environment the Gospel gives complete moral and doctrinal freedom.

This focus within the ELCA has been articulated by Dr. Robert Benne, Director of the Roanoke College Center for Religion and Society, who noted:

[The action at the Churchwide Assembly] illuminated many more grave problems. Perhaps the foremost among them is the distortion of the Gospel that has taken place in the working theology of the ELCA. The ELCA has replaced the "Gospel of redemption" with the "Gospel of inclusion." The former is Trinitarian in structure and holds to God's Law as both the standard for moral guidance and repentance, to God's forgiveness and affirmation of the repentant sinner through his grace in Christ, and to the work of the Holy Spirit in amendment of life according to God's commandments. The gospel of inclusion, which now is in ascendance in the ELCA, emphasizes a grace that accepts everyone just as they are and includes them without repentance and amendment of life into God's kingdom. It's dominance in the ELCA recalls H. Richard Niebuhr's famous indictment of liberal Protestantism. "A God without wrath brings men (sic) without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross."<sup>15</sup>

However, actions taken at the Churchwide Assembly raise another concern: the ELCA is not following its own constitutional requirements (See Appendix A). Dr. James R. Crumley, former national Bishop of the Lutheran Church in America, stated:

I conclude that there is no evidence based on the text of Scripture which permits or mandates the change as stated in the new policy adopted at the assembly. The action rather was unconstitutional and violated a part of the Confession of Faith. On that basis, the appropriate question is whether the ELCA is still without question a faithful and confessing church. I conclude that the ELCA has placed itself in a precarious position. Can I recognize my membership as authentic and God-serving in the fullest and truest sense?<sup>16</sup>

By officially condoning behavior expressly condemned by Scripture, the ELCA has called into question the idea of, or need for, confession of sins (or at least some of them) and God's divine mercy to be freed from the effects of sin.<sup>17</sup> To the committee's knowledge, these actions by the ELCA for the first time condone behavior expressly

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<sup>14</sup> This and the following paragraph are freely adopted from pages 146-149, "Law and Gospel and the Doctrine of God: Missouri in the 1960s and 1970s." <http://www.ctsfw.net/media/pdfs/murraymissourinthe1960s.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> Why There Must Be New Beginnings, <http://www.lutherancore.org/papers/benne-beginnings.shtml>

<sup>16</sup> Remarks of Dr. James R. Crumley, Jr., [http://www.lutherancore.org/papers/crumley\\_2010.shtml](http://www.lutherancore.org/papers/crumley_2010.shtml)

<sup>17</sup> "We confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves." *Lutheran Book of Worship*, page 56.

prohibited by the Holy Scriptures. Moreover, they established mechanisms to effectively celebrate such conduct by its rostered clergy.<sup>18</sup> The committee is concerned by such departures from traditionally accepted doctrines of the church and takes seriously the warnings in various passages of Scripture against false teachings.<sup>19</sup>

The committee is also concerned that the ELCA has not prioritized, as it should, the Great Commission that forms the basis of UALC's life and mission. Dr. Robert Benne went so far as to say: "It is no secret that the ELCA has begun a pitiful number of new congregations at home and has dramatically reduced its missionaries abroad. Indeed, a particularly painful decision has been its refusal to do 'pioneer' missionary work – proclaiming the Gospel to those who have never heard it."<sup>20</sup> As discussed below, the committee believes that UALC can affiliate with other Lutheran church bodies that will better assist UALC in advancing its mission "to be and make disciples."

In sum, it is the belief of the committee that the divergence between UALC and the ELCA has grown to such a magnitude that it is affecting the ability of UALC to accomplish its mission. There are two elements underlying this belief: (1) The time and human resources used to voice concerns about directions taken by the ELCA, and to try to function well within the ELCA, are detracting from UALC's ability to accomplish its mission. (2) Financial resources supporting the ELCA can be used more productively by UALC "to be and make disciples."

## **Recommendation 2**

The ELCA Review Committee recommends that UALC become a multi-affiliated congregation. Membership in Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC) should be reaffirmed. In addition, UALC should consider affiliating with the North American Lutheran Church (NALC). As UALC becomes more involved with its affiliates, the congregation is also encouraged to identify and participate with other organizations and groups that will strengthen and support UALC in mission.

The committee studied four Lutheran groups in addition to LCMC (American Association of Lutheran Churches, Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, Church of the Lutheran Brethren of America, and the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod). It was the considered judgment of the committee that either the groups were too small with limited potential for growth, or their faith statements contained elements not consistent with that of UALC. Also, becoming an independent Lutheran congregation was not seen as a viable alternative since associating with other congregations increases accountability, facilitates the identification of candidates for call, facilitates collaborative efforts to extend the kingdom, and is a potential source for employee benefits.

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<sup>18</sup> Scripture provides high standards of conduct for church leaders. See, for example, 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9 and 1 Peter 5:1-11.

<sup>19</sup> See, for example, Jude 3-16 and I Peter 2.

<sup>20</sup> Why There Must Be New Beginnings, <http://www.lutherancore.org/papers/benne-beginnings.shtml>

Given the mission focus of LCMC and the expected mission focus of the NALC, the committee believes that affirming its affiliation with LCMC and considering affiliation with NALC will enhance the ability of UALC to accomplish its mission.

LCMC has “one primary mission: that of sharing the life-giving Gospel of Jesus Christ. [LCMC is] focused on starting congregations in this country, supporting missionaries around the world, and raising up and training leaders to serve Christ and His church. LCMC is committed to knowing Jesus and to making Jesus known. The association is dedicated to helping member congregations carry out this mission.”<sup>21</sup>

Growing out of Lutheran CORE, the NALC is in the process of being formed. In a statement outlining the underlying expectations for the NALC constitution, four concepts are focal points: Christ-Centered, Mission-Driven, Traditionally-Grounded and Congregationally-Focused. As a mission-driven denomination, the NALC (and Lutheran CORE) believes “that making disciples for Christ is the core priority of the Church, that congregation planting is often best done through local congregations, and that both external and internal evangelization must be a priority of the Church in the present age.”<sup>22</sup>

Many are concerned that leaving the ELCA could result in UALC staff members losing health and pension benefits. This is not the case. A letter from the ELCA Board of Pensions (Appendix B) states that UALC can continue to participate in Board of Pensions’ plans should it leave the ELCA. The paragraph in the letter addressing this issue is:

We understand you may have questions about how a potential change in membership could affect employee benefits. It is important to know that your congregation will remain eligible to provide ELCA benefits to current and future employees (i.e., pastors, rostered laypersons and lay employees), regardless of the outcome of your discernment.<sup>23</sup>

The significance of this is that if UALC were to leave the ELCA, staff members of UALC would not be negatively affected through loss of benefits.

The LCMC maintains a list of rostered clergy from which a congregation can identify individuals to call and has a process to vet individuals for inclusion on the roster. Congregations may call any pastor on the roster. They also have developed a process for discipline of congregations and clergy. Since the NALC will not formally exist until August 2010, one must look to The Vision and Plan for the North American Lutheran Church. In this document one reads:

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. The bishop and local deans will be available to

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<sup>21</sup> Consider Your Options. <http://www.lcmc.net/pdf/cyo2.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> “A Vision and Plan for The North American Lutheran Church and Lutheran CORE, a community of confessing Lutherans,” <http://www.lutherancore.org/pdf/vision-and-plan-2-18-10.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> Letter from Christina Von Bank, Manager, Outreach Education, dated September 11, 2009.

provide assistance and counsel on these matters, using resources such as WordAlone's Clergy Connect service.<sup>24</sup>

Also, in the Vision Plan the authors noted:

The NALC will have the capacity and authority to train, certify, ordain, call, encourage, care for and discipline pastors, ensure faithful preaching and teaching by its clergy, and support and, as necessary, discipline congregations.<sup>25</sup>

### **Recommendation 3**

The ELCA Review Committee recommends that a broad range of communications, including the dissemination of this report and other relevant materials, informational meetings, and teachings on biblical authority and sexuality, be offered to the congregation prior to the congregational vote. The teachings should be done by UALC's worship community leaders.

The committee believes that an important element of helping members of the congregation understand the issues associated with leaving the ELCA relates to Biblical Authority. A teaching on this topic will help members be more aware of the factors giving rise to the recommendation to leave. In addition, many members are struggling with the sexuality statement since much of it, along with the implementing resolutions, sounds very "Christian". These individuals are seeking guidance as to how the issue should be interpreted suggesting a need for a teaching focusing on what the Bible says on the issue. This teaching would include a complete treatment of Scripture's teaching on God's gift of sexuality and its proper use.

### **Recommendation 4**

The ELCA Review Committee recommends that the UALC constitution be amended to reflect disaffiliation from the ELCA. The suggested revisions are noted below.

Pending affiliation with another denomination, Article V should be deleted in its entirety. This article describes the affiliation with the ELCA.

The following sections need to be revised since they refer to the ELCA and/or current Synod structure and governance:

- Article VI, Sections B, C, D
- Article XII, Sections A, B, C, D

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<sup>24</sup> Page 13, "A Vision and Plan for The North American Lutheran Church and Lutheran CORE, a community of confessing Lutherans," <http://www.lutherancore.org/pdf/vision-and-plan-2-18-10.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> Page 5, "A Vision and Plan for The North American Lutheran Church and Lutheran CORE, a community of confessing Lutherans," <http://www.lutherancore.org/pdf/vision-and-plan-2-18-10.pdf>

- Article XIII, Section C (the last part of the section making reference to calling a special meeting at the request of the Synod Bishop)

## **CLOSING COMMENTS**

The ELCA Review Committee believes that implementing the above recommendations will help UALC fulfill its mission. Resources released by disaffiliation from the ELCA will provide additional financial and human resources helping UALC to fulfill its mission in a manner consistent with its beliefs. LCMC and NALC are committed to the belief that external and internal evangelization must be a priority of the Church in the present age.

The seven members of the committee unanimously support the above recommendations.

Loren Geistfeld, Chair  
Charles Aldag  
Carolyn Denner  
Nancy Gillette  
Paul Nordman  
Charles Oellermann  
Paul Ulring

## APPENDIX A

### ELCA Constitutional Statement of Faith<sup>26</sup>

#### Chapter 2.

#### CONFESSION OF FAITH

2.01. This church confesses the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

2.02. This church confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe.

a. Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, through whom everything was made and through whose life, death, and resurrection God fashions a new creation.

b. The proclamation of God's message to us as both Law and Gospel is the Word of God, revealing judgment and mercy through word and deed, beginning with the Word in creation, continuing in the history of Israel, and centering in all its fullness in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

c. 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. Through them God's Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.

2.03. This church accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life.

2.04. This church accepts the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of this church.

2.05. This church accepts the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true witness to the Gospel, acknowledging as one with it in faith and doctrine all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.

2.06. This church accepts the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord, namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles and the Treatise, the Small Catechism, the Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, as further valid interpretations of the faith of the Church.

2.07. This church confesses the Gospel, recorded in the Holy Scripture and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God's mission in the world.

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<sup>26</sup> Constitutions of the ELCA, <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>

## APPENDIX B

### Letter from Board of Pensions

September 11, 2009

Mr. Jeffrey M Sylvester, Personnel Manager  
Upper Arlington Lutheran Church  
The Church on Lytham  
2300 Lytham Rd  
Columbus OH 43220

Dear Jeff,

I want to thank you again for your time in early June when TJ Ticey and I had the opportunity to visit you. TJ shared your note from September 9<sup>th</sup> with me. As a service unit of this church, we hope you will continue to remain part of the ELCA, contributing to a shared mission of serving Christ Jesus.

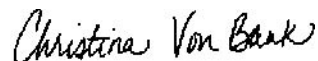
If your congregation has not done so already, we urge you to engage your synod bishop in your discernment process as soon as possible.

We understand you may have questions about how a potential change in membership could affect employee benefits. It is important to know that your congregation will remain eligible to provide ELCA benefits to current and future employees (i.e., pastors, rostered laypersons and lay employees), regardless of the outcome of your discernment.

Today, nearly 10,000 employers, including some outside the ELCA, sponsor their pastors, rostered laypersons and lay employees in the ELCA benefits program. The size of this nationwide program helps make it an efficient, strong source of comprehensive, wellness-oriented benefits for all who participate.

Please keep this information about continuing participation in the ELCA benefits program in mind as your congregation considers its future. If you have any questions, feel free to contact our Service Center at (800) 352-2876 Monday – Friday, 7:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. (Central), or [mail@elcabop.org](mailto:mail@elcabop.org). We remain faithful to the well-being of those who serve.

Sincerely,



Christina Von Bank  
Manager, Outreach Education