

Charter for an interunit staff team on Faith, Science and Technology

PURPOSE

The purpose of the interunit staff team on Faith, Science and Technology is to support and coordinate relationships between the churchwide organization and other expressions of the ELCA and the church's ecumenical partners on matters and activities regarding faith, science and technology.

VISION

The team envisions an ELCA that:

a) believes the triune God of creation, redemption and sanctification is the ultimate source and power embracing the one universe that both religion and science seek to apprehend and to understand

b) affirms that Christian faith and the endeavors of common reason are both gifts of God to enable the pursuit of truth about reality, including the affirmation that it is the triune God who has created energy, matter, life and humankind through the processes that science investigates

c) recognizes a cultural situation that is pervasively shaped -- often unconsciously -- by science and technology and that this fact impacts the way this church is called to be faithful in evangelism, congregational life, Christian service and vocation, education and other pursuits of knowledge and understanding, and efforts for justice

d) possesses an affirmative perspective on the complex relationship of faith and science as an alternative to antagonistic or segregated perspectives, whether religious or secular

e) welcomes scientists and seeks to honor their vocational gifts in ministry and mission

f) empowers members to engage issues of science and technology with prophetic faithfulness and confidence

g) understands how Christian education and formation in the 21st century must enable people to address the complex relationship of faith and science that are part of this cultural situation

GOALS

The team will:

- a) coordinate and provide accountability for the integration, communication and networking efforts within the churchwide organization and for its work with other expressions of the church
- b) help facilitate efforts within the ELCA to articulate a Lutheran understanding of the relationship between faith and science and technology
- c) provide for increased awareness of and attention to the issues of science and technology within the churchwide organization and its activities, especially policy, issue analysis and interpretation
- d) encourage the development and provision for resources that are accessible and responsive to the needs of ELCA parishes, constituencies and other partners in ministry
- e) provide support for the ELCA Alliance for Faith, Science and Technology, which is an Independent Lutheran Organization, and the team's liaison to that organization

TEAM COMPOSITION, LEADERSHIP

The executive director of the ELCA Division for Church in Society shall appoint one member of that staff to be responsible for oversight of the team and its work. The team shall select a liaison to the ELCA Alliance for Faith, Science and Technology, in consultation with that person's unit director.

Each unit director of the ELCA Divisions for Congregational Ministry, for Higher Education and Schools and for Ministry, and the Department for Information Technology shall appoint one member of his or her staff to the team.

All officers and unit directors of the churchwide organization are invited to appoint members of their staffs to the team, especially those who have expressed an interest in matters and activities regarding faith, science and technology.

The team meets twice each month, September through June, generally noon to 1:30 p.m. on the first and third Tuesdays, and at other times deemed necessary. Members of the team volunteer to take turns assembling an agenda and convening the team. Conveners serve terms of two or three months (i.e., January-February, March-April, May-July, August-October and November-December).

RESPONSIBLE UNIT, REPORTING

The staff member, whom the executive director of the ELCA Division for Church in Society appointed to be responsible for oversight of the team, reports to her or his supervisor. Each member of the team is encouraged to report the team's activities within his or her unit.

The team's relationship with the Alliance's steering committee is such that each acts in an advisory capacity to the other. The team may establish working relationships with other entities involved in matters and activities regarding faith, science and technology.

FINANCES

Financial support for the work of the interunit staff team will be included in the budget of the ELCA Division for Church in Society with support from other units.

ACTIVITIES

The team's activities may include but are not limited to:

- + Educational presentations on matters and activities regarding faith, science and technology for the personal and professional enrichment of all churchwide staff and other interested individuals. The presentations are made generally noon to 1:00 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month September through June.

- + Content of pages at <http://www.elca.org/faithandscience> on the ELCA Web site.

- + Databases of resources addressing the complex relationship of faith and science.

- + Efforts within and for the church that address the complex relationship of faith and science, as needs become evident and the resources become available.

- + Alliance activities as requested by the Alliance steering committee and as the team deems possible, especially the Alliance's involvement in and with the Ecumenical Roundtable on Faith, Science and Technology.

APPENDICES

1. *Addressing Matters of Faith and Science within the Reorganization of the Churchwide Structure*

2. *The "desired outcomes" of Addressing Matters of Faith and Science within the Reorganization of the Churchwide Structure*