

INFORMATION ABOUT WordAlone Network

As Lutherans, we are called to Renew, Reform and Reflect

Renew

The WordAlone Network works to renew the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, local churches, pastors and laypersons. Renewing, in our case, means invigorating the church, its preaching and its members. How? Pray for the Holy Spirit to come in power to the church. Read the Bible with the eyes of faith and be changed by it. Tell one another the story of Jesus. Remind each other that when we still were in sin God loved us enough to send his Son to free us from sin and reconcile us to Him. Then, we are ready to share the story of redemption with the unchurched near home as well as to support world evangelism more generously. As we see we are free of the self-centeredness of sin, we can live the Gospel of love without regard to what others may think—ready to serve each other and those who have been treated unjustly.

WordAlone intends to seek, lift up and to prepare resources that will be helpful and available for churches, pastors and members to use in outreach and ministry. We intend to be a network of churches that work with each other to be more effective witnesses for Jesus in our communities and abroad.

Reform

In the 20 years since the ELCA was constituted, many changes have been made; shortcomings discovered; and necessary reforms come to light. The smaller denominations that came together in the ELCA were more like extended families than formal organizations. People knew each other. Much of the less formal give and take among smaller predecessor bodies was lost in the merger. That discussion, listening and “answering to” are minimized by the current governance set-up in the ELCA. WordAlone seeks a more representative and responsive system. One step in that direction was a 2005 Churchwide Assembly vote to let local synods, rather than a national committee, nominate candidates for the churchwide Church Council. We also suggested making the ELCA more responsive by forwarding major churchwide resolutions to local synods for ratification.

WordAlone resists a requirement that all pastors be ordained by bishops through informing seminarians how to apply for exceptions to that requirement. We oppose a mandate that new bishops enter into The Episcopal Church’s historic episcopate. There should be freedom for all pastors and bishops to choose not to conform to an historic episcopate.

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Reflect

WordAlone's goal is an informed and active ELCA membership. Decisions on proposed policies and practices should be made based on sound biblical and confessional foundations. Choices should be generated with grassroots participation and consensus, not simply by a small fraction of ELCA members voting at churchwide assemblies. But, how will ELCA members gain biblical insights and confessional knowledge to consider churchwide questions or controversies?

WordAlone's response is two-fold: First, to develop educational resources for Bible studies and adult forums; secondly, to establish an institute for theological studies that will prepare new pastors and other ministers for service, educate future college and seminary professors, provide continuing education for pastors as well as provide edifying and informative programs for laypersons. The institute will set a biblical and confessional tone in its courses and programs. This will be a multi-site educational system built not with bricks and mortar but online and at existing institutions. Several have agreed to host classes taught by WordAlone professors or to fold WordAlone students into some of their programs, including Concordia Seminary of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in St. Louis, Mo.