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# ELCA Style Guide

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Version 2  
January 2012



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

# ELCA Style Guide

## Alphabetized Word List

The primary style manual for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is the current edition of Associated Press Stylebook (AP Stylebook). The primary dictionary is the current edition of Merriam-Webster's Dictionary. When alternate spellings are available in the dictionary, the first reference is used. For matters not treated here or in the AP Stylebook, consult the current edition of Chicago Manual of Style. Do not assume that an entry in this word list implies a difference with Merriam-Webster's Dictionary or AP Stylebook.

### NOTES:

- Use only one space between sentences and after a colon (*except* in biblical citations where there is no space following the colon). This style is recommended by both AP Stylebook and Chicago Manual of Style.
- In general, italic type is discouraged. It is used in this guide, as it is in AP Stylebook, for emphasis and clarity.
- An entry marked “preferred” indicates the style that should be used if at all possible. If an alternative is needed, justification for the choice should be provided to the Editorial Specialist.

### Abba

Aramaic for “father”; do not italicize

### acronyms

generally *do not use* acronyms, *exceptions* are ELCA, acronyms in common usage per Merriam-Webster's Dictionary and acronyms for versions of the Bible. Spell out the name of this church in first reference with acronym in parentheses following:

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is a church body whose national offices are in Chicago. The ELCA comprises over 10,000 congregations.

Examples of commonly used acronyms listed in Merriam-Webster's Dictionary include: HTML, URL, NAACP, PBS, NPR, LGBT

*see* Appendix 1 for acronyms for versions of the Bible

### accommodate

*note*: this word has double “c” *and* “m”

### accompaniment

describes the way God walks with us, and the way the ELCA therefore walks with and works among Christian communities in other countries as well as work in local communities *avoid usage* in public documents; use other terminology that is more readily understood

### A.D./B.C.; C.E./B.C.E./

*see* B.C./A.D.

### adolescent

*do not use*; use boy, girl, young adult or youth instead

*see* these entries for further guidelines

### adult

at age 18, everyone is either a man or a woman; any reference to adult women as “girls” or adult men as “boys” is unacceptable

*see also* boy; girl; man; woman; young adult; youth

### advent/Advent

capitalize when referring to the Advent season; but lowercase for “the advent of our Lord”

### affect, effect

most common usages: “affect” (verb) means “to influence”:

The sudden snowstorm affected their travel plans.

“effect” (noun) means “a result or consequence”:

The sudden snowstorm had no effect on their travel plans.

much less often, “effect” as a verb means “to bring about” or “to cause”:

The new mayor hoped to effect change in the economy.

### affirmation of baptism/Affirmation of Baptism

lowercase when used as a general term:

After the hymn of the day comes the affirmation of baptism.

capitalize only when referring to the title of the liturgical rite:

Note how the laying on of hands is done in Affirmation of Baptism, “Book of Worship,” page 82.

*see* baptism

### **Africa/African**

use only when referring to the entire continent; otherwise, refer to a particular country, culture or people

### **African American (adj.)**

do not hyphenate (*exception* to AP Stylebook); the usage of the cultural-ethnic background of people who were transplanted to the Americas (by immigration or by slave trade) is preferred, rather than referencing skin color. This usage affirms the rich ethnic traditions from which people have come rather than simply indicating skin color or a perceived skin color. Because members of some ethnic groups use different terms when referring to themselves, if possible ask them how they would like to be identified.

### **African Descent (adj.)**

people whose ancestors, however long ago, came from Africa:

We attended a meeting of the African Descent community.

### **age**

- refer to people age 18 and older as either a man or a woman; at age 18, everyone is referred to as an adult
- *avoid* using the terms “boy” and “girl” for anyone older than 12
- “older adult” is *preferred* over “elderly” or “senior citizen”; but their use in generic phrases that do not refer to specific individuals is acceptable: “senior citizen’s discount,” “a home for the elderly”
- *always* use numerals; hyphenate ages used as adjectives:

A 5-year-old girl painted it.

or as a substitute for a noun:

The book was written for 3-year-olds.

- *avoid* using “teenager,” “adolescent” and “kids”

*see also* adult; boy; girl; man; woman; young adult; youth

### **AIDS**

acronym for acquired immunodeficiency sndrome; use all caps, no periods; use “people with AIDS,” or “people living with AIDS”; *do not use* “AIDS victim”; when reference also includes family and friends, use “people affected by AIDS” *use* “HIV and AIDS” *not* “HIV/AIDS”

*see also* HIV

### **Alaska Native**

indigenous people of Alaska; because members of some ethnic groups use different terms when referring to themselves, if possible ask them how they would like to be identified

*do not use* “Native Alaskan”

### **Alcoholics Anonymous**

AA is acceptable after first reference; note the absence of punctuation per both AP Stylebook and Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary

### **Aleut**

one of numerous Alaska Native people; indigenous people of the Aleutian Islands off the southwest coast of Alaska

*see also* Alaska Native

### **Allah**

Arabic for “God”

### **alleluia/Alleluia!**

capitalize only when used as an interjection

### **a lot**

two words

### **all right**

two words

### **All Saints Day**

no apostrophe

### **almighty God**

*note* capitalization treatment

### **all ready, already**

“all ready” is used as an adjective and means “completely ready”:

The disciples were all ready to follow Jesus anywhere.

“already” is an adverb of time and means “before then”:

The disciples already were called by Jesus.

### **all together, altogether**

“all together” is an adjective and means “gathered in one place”:

The Old and New Testaments were printed all together in one volume.

“altogether” is an adverb meaning “wholly” or “completely”:

The stories were altogether true.

or “in all”:

There were four stories altogether.

or “on the whole”, “in the main”:

Altogether, the story seemed probable.

### **altar**

the table or stand used for sacred purposes in worship; *note* spelling in this usage is *not* “alter”

### **a.m., p.m.**

lowercase, with periods

### **ambo**

single reading stand for the proclamation of the readings and preaching; often used instead of “lectern” in liturgical settings

### **America**

*do not use* when “United States” is meant

### **American(s)**

popular usage, even outside the United States, often refers to citizens of the United States as “Americans”; however, U.S. citizens are not the only Americans; strictly speaking, they are also not the only North Americans; be as clear as possible in the reference, such as “people of the United States” or “citizens of [country]”

### **American Indian**

indigenous people of North America, except for those identified as Alaska Native people; refer to a specific nation when possible:

He is a Hopi commissioner.

because members of some ethnic groups use different terms when referring to themselves, if possible ask them how they would like to be identified

### **amid**

*not* “amidst”

### **among**

*not* “amongst”

### **among, between**

in general, “among” introduces more than two items:

Jesus distributed the bread among the men, women and children gathered at the Mount.

and “between” introduces only two items:

I am between a rock and a hard place.

*see* AP Stylebook entry for “among, between” for more information

### **and/or**

*do not use* this device or shortcut, as it damages the clarity of a sentence and often leads to confusion or ambiguity; instead offer more explanation as to the options involved in the reference

### **annunciation/Annunciation**

capitalize only when referring to the festival on March 25 that commemorates the announcement of the incarnation to Mary: “The Annunciation of Our Lord”

### **anti-**

in general, hyphenate after this prefix, although there are many exceptions

*see* AP Stylebook entry for more information

*see also* prefix

### **anti-Christ/Antichrist**

“anti-Christ” (adjective) refers to someone or something opposed to Christ

“Antichrist” (proper name) refers to the individual who, according to the Bible, will challenge Christ

### **anti-racism**

hyphenate

### **anti-Semitic/anti-Semitism**

*note* capitalization

### **anyone, any one; everyone, every one; someone, some one**

when the stress is on “any,” “every,” or “some” and when the person/people is/are thought of in general terms, write as one word:

Everyone who is baptized ...

when the focus is on each person and the emphasis is on individuality, write as two words:

Every one of the baptized ...

### **apocalypse/Apocalypse**

capitalize only when referring to the book of Revelation or the Apocalypse of John

### **Apocrypha**

Jewish intertestamental writings; the books that are in the Septuagint or Vulgate versions of the Bible, but not included in the Jewish and Protestant canon

### **apocryphal/Apocryphal**

lowercase when referring to a story that may not be true; capitalize only when referring to the Apocrypha

### **apologist/Apologist(s)**

capitalize only when referring to someone who was of this group of second-century Christian theologians, such as Justin Martyr

### **Apology, the**

place in quotation marks when referring to the work by Justin Martyr or Plato; do not use quotation marks when referring to the Apology to the Augsburg Confession

### **apostle/Apostle(s)**

“the apostle Paul,” “this apostle”; but “Apostle Paul”

### **Apostles’ Creed, the**

capitalize, with an apostrophe; but lowercase “creed” when using the short form in subsequent references: “the creed”

### **apostolic/Apostolic**

“apostolic church,” “apostolic council,” “apostolic greetings,” “apostolic succession”; but “the Apostolic Fathers”

### **appraise, apprise**

“appraise” is to evaluate:

Let me appraise the situation in the assembly plenary.

“apprise” is to inform:

I will apprise the secretary of the mood of the plenary.

### **article/Article**

capitalize when referring to individual articles of the creeds: “the Third Article”; but “this article”

### **as, like**

use “as” as a conjunction to introduce clauses:

Jane plays cello as a musician should.

use “like” as a preposition for comparing nouns and pronouns, which requires a direct object:

Jane plays like a musician.

### **ascension/Ascension**

lowercase “Christ’s ascension”; capitalize only when referring to the Thursday, 40 days after Easter, that commemorates Christ’s ascent into heaven: “Ascension Day”

### **Ash Wednesday**

capitalize

### **Asian**

use for people from countries in Asia; *do not use* “Asiatic” or “Oriental” when referring to people; whenever possible, make references to the specific country:

Filipinos are people from the Philippines.

### **Asian American (adj.)**

do not hyphenate (*exception* to AP Stylebook); U.S. citizens of Asian descent

### **assembly/Assembly**

capitalize when referring to a specific assembly, whether or not the year is included:

I attended the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

may lowercase and use only “assembly” upon subsequent reference:

Important decisions are made during the Churchwide Assembly. During the assembly...

“assembly” is also used when referring to the worshiping congregation with its ministers:

The assembly rose to sing the hymn.

*see also* Churchwide Assembly; Synod Assembly

### **assisting minister**

lowercase

### **associate/s in ministry**

one of the rosters of the ELCA; lowercase in running copy; avoid using the acronym (AiM or AIM) because it is not well-known

## **assumption/Assumption**

capitalize only when referring to the Aug. 15 festival on the Roman Catholic calendar: “The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary”

## **Athanasian Creed, the**

capitalize; but lowercase “creed” when using the short form in subsequent references: “the creed”

## **atonement**

lowercase

## **Augsburg Confession**

*do not* italicize or enclose in quotation marks

## **a while, awhile**

when used with “for,” write as two words:

She will travel for a while.

but

She will travel awhile.

## **Baal/baals**

reference to any of numerous Canaanite and Phoenician local deities; singular, without article, usually capitalize:

The people went out to worship Baal.

plural form is lowercase: “baals” or “baalim”

## **baby Jesus**

lowercase “baby”

## **baptism/Baptism**

baptism is the celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Baptism; capitalize when referring to the Christian sacrament or rite: “Holy Baptism,” “Sacrament of Holy Baptism”; lowercase when used as a general term: “baptism by fire,” “remembering my baptism,” “Jesus’ baptism”:

Many Christians practice infant baptism.

## **baptismal, baptismal candle, baptismal garment**

any such adjectival usage of “baptismal” is lowercase

## **baptismal font**

*prefer* simply “font”

## **baptized, the**

lowercase

## **B.C./A.D.; B.C.E./C.E.**

B.C. is abbreviation for “before Christ,” and should come after the year; A.D. is abbreviation for “anno Domini,” “in the year of our Lord,” and should come before the year; B.C.E. is abbreviation for “before the common era”; C.E. is abbreviation for “common era”;

*prefer* usage of B.C./A.D.; however B.C.E./C.E. are acceptable to use especially in an inter-religious situation where this usage is more hospitable than B.C./A.D.;

*do not use* small caps

## **the/beatitude(s), Beatitudes**

capitalize only when referring to Matthew 5:1-12 and Luke 6:20-26; but “Jesus’ beatitudes”

## **between**

*see* among, between

## **biannual, biennial**

“biannual” means twice a year:

The committee meets biannually.

*prefer* “semiannual”

“biennial” means every two years:

The ELCA Churchwide Assembly meets biennially.

## **Bible/Holy Bible, the**

in general, capitalize; but lowercase when used as a nonreligious term:

My dictionary is my bible.

*see also* books of the Bible

## **Bible, version of**

the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible is the version to be used for all biblical references; if it is necessary, in a particular context, to quote from another version of the Bible, reasoning for this deviation from the standard should be provided when the document is submitted to the Marketing Communications team for editorial review as well as an indication of which version is being used

*see* biblical text references

*see also* Appendix 1 for appropriate credit lines for various versions of the Bible

## **biblical (adj.)**

lowercase

## biblical quotations

if a biblical quotation consists of only one verse, it can be credited by simply putting the abbreviation for the version of the Bible used in small caps after the citation; if the resource contains numerous biblical references, a credit line should be added on the copyright page of the resource crediting the appropriate version used

*see also* New Revised Standard Version, the *see* Appendix 1 for appropriate credit lines

## biblical text citations

- never put a space after the colon in a biblical citation: Psalm 23:1 *not* Psalm 23: 1
- complete chapters cited within a body of copy may use chapter number only: Matthew 5; at other times (for example, when listing a Bible basis), list the complete citation: Matthew 5:1-48
- arabic numbers (*not* Roman numerals) are used for numbered books: 2 Thessalonians; if a sentence starts with a book name, spell out the number:  
Second Thessalonians begins with ... .
- if a reference to the Bible translation follows a verse citation, it is placed in small caps without a comma: Matthew 13:34 KJV; references to Bible translation within copy should be spelled out upon first usage; subsequently the appropriate acronym may be used.
- examples of biblical references:  
It is then we remember the words,  
“There is the Lamb of God” (John 1:29 TEV).  
But Paul and Silas did not give up hope, singing and praying even in prison (verse 25). or (v. 25).  
“And I will be with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20).
- examples of punctuation within the citation for biblical text references:  
Matthew 13:34  
Matthew 13:34-35 [use a hyphen]  
Matthew 13:34, 48, 56 [comma and space between nonconsecutive verses]  
Matthew 5; 8 [semicolon to separate whole, nonconsecutive chapters]  
Matthew 13:34; 14:7 [semicolon and space to separate chapters that have verse references]

Acts 2:4; Matthew 13:34 [semicolon and space to separate citations from different books of the Bible]

- the following examples make use of the en dash and are an *exception* to the AP Stylebook; they follow the rules set forth by the style guide of the Society for Biblical Literature

Matthew 13:34 – 14:7 [en dash for a passage that encompasses parts of two chapters];

Matthew 5 – 7 [en dash to separate whole, consecutive chapters]

Matthew 4:8 – 5:48 [when reference ends with the end of a chapter, cite ending verse number to *avoid* a citation like Matthew 4:8 – 5]

*see also* books of the Bible

*see* dash

## biennial

*see* biannual, biennial

## bisexual

no hyphen

*see also* LGBT

## bishop

- in first reference, lowercase:  
Closing remarks were given by the Rev. Janice Schulz, bishop of the ELCA Central States Synod.  
thereafter “Bishop Schulz”
- when the title comes before the name, capitalize title: “Bishop Janice Schulz”
- *do not use* both “the Rev.” and the title before the person’s name: *not* “the Rev. Bishop Joseph Anderson”
- the title of the chief executive officer of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is “presiding bishop”; capitalize when used with a name:  
Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson led worship.  
the name of the office is “Office of the Presiding Bishop”
- district presidents in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod do not use the title “bishop”
- for questions about titles of leaders of other denominations, consult with staff of Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Affairs or Office of the Secretary

**Black (adj.)**

capitalize when referring to a group: “Black Americans,” “historic Black churches”; similar style is used with other group designations: “historic White churches”

*prefer* to reference ethnic background rather than skin color

*avoid* using as a noun

**blind**

use “people who are blind,” “people who are visually impaired,” “blind people”; *do not use* “the blind”

*see also* disability

**blog**

short for “Web log”; Internet communication with regular updates (“posts”) typically displayed in reverse chronological order and maintained by one person

**body and blood of Christ**

elements of the Sacrament of Holy Communion

**body of Christ, the**

refers to the church universal or the church catholic

*see* catholic

**book**

do not capitalize when referring to a book of the Bible:

This story is in the book of Daniel.

delete “book” if this removal is not disruptive to the meaning:

This story is in Daniel.

**books of the Bible**

to avoid confusion for the reader, *always* spell out names of the books of the Bible in running text  
*see* AP Stylebook “Bible” for approved standard names

**boy**

use only for males under age 12

*see* adult; man; young adult; youth

**brandmark**

one word; the official, unifying graphic identity of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America includes three elements: the emblem, the name of this church and the tagline; the brandmark does not always include the tagline but it must *always*

include the name and the emblem; brandmark resources can be found at [www.elca.org/godsworkeourhands](http://www.elca.org/godsworkeourhands); consult [www.elca.org/trademark](http://www.elca.org/trademark) for approved usage of the brandmark  
*see also* emblem; tagline; sub-brand

**Burma**

*prefer* “Myanmar”

**bulleted lists**

*see* lists

**cabinet**

capitalize when writing “ELCA Cabinet of Executives” or “Cabinet of Executives”; lowercase when referring to it subsequently: “the cabinet”

**calendar, the**

list of church seasons, Sundays, festivals, lesser festivals, commemorations and occasions; lowercase

**cancer**

*see* disease

**canon, canonical (adj.)**

lowercase

**catechetical**

lowercase

**catechism/Catechism**

lowercase except when used as part of a title: “the Small Catechism,” “the Large Catechism”

**catechumen**

youth or adult preparing for baptism and first communion

**catechumenate**

process through which youth or adults prepare for baptism and first communion

**catholic/Catholic**

lowercase when referring to the universal church:

I believe in ... the holy, catholic church.

but capitalize when it refers to the “Roman Catholic Church”

**Catholic Reformation**

*see* Counter-Reformation



**C.E./B.C.E.**

*see* B.C./A.D.

**centuries**

reference to a particular century in a sentence should be lowercase and spelled out for numbers less than 10: “the second century,” “the 19<sup>th</sup> century”

*note* that the reference should be hyphenated if used as an adjective: “20th-century music”

*note* that the -th or -st may be superscripted or not  
*see also* dates; decades

**chair**

may also use “convener,” “presider,” “moderator,” “coordinator” or “leader”

*exception to AP Stylebook: do not use* “chairman” or “chairwoman”

**chalice and paten**

*prefer* “cup and plate” for simplicity or clarification

**Chanukah**

*preferred* spelling is “Hanukkah”

**chaplain**

on first reference, “Chaplain Randall Whitmore, U.S. Army” is acceptable, with “Chaplain Whitmore” on second reference; rank ought not to be used as a title, but if included, write: “Lt. Randall Whitmore, chaplain in the U.S. Army”  
*note* that the rank should be abbreviated

**chapter**

in parentheses or notes, may use “chap. 2,” “chaps. 2–4”; otherwise, write out in running text

**Chicano**

*avoid*; use “Latino” instead  
*see* Latino

**chosen people**

lowercase

**chrism**

oil used for anointing at baptism

**Christ child**

“child” may be capitalized when used alone in referring to Jesus if the meaning is otherwise unclear

**Christendom**

capitalize

**Christian**

capitalize

**Christian church**

*note* that “church” is lowercase

**Christianity**

capitalize

**Christlike**

capitalize

**Christmas cycle, the**

*note* capitalization treatment

**Christmas Day**

capitalize

**Christmas Eve**

capitalize

**Christmas season, the**

*note* capitalization treatment

**Christ the King**

festival of the church year

**church/Church**

- lowercase in instances such as: “the early church,” “the Lutheran church,” “the church (building),” “church founders,” “church school”
- *do not use* “church” when you mean “congregation:  
Our congregation has many young members.
- *not* “Our church has many young members.” capitalize only when referring to a specific church: “St. Matthew’s Lutheran Church”; or to the corporate title of a church body: “Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,” “Roman Catholic Church”
- in references to or as an alternative for “ELCA,” use “this church”; usage of “our church” is also possible when used in a fundraising reference
- when referring to the catholic (universal) church, “church” should be lowercased unless quoting an original source

*see also catholic/Catholic*

## **church bodies**

lowercase

### **Church Council**

use in reference to ELCA Church Council only; if the context clearly indicates that the ELCA Church Council is meant, lowercase “council” may be used upon subsequent references  
*see also* Congregation Council

### **churchwide (adj.)**

*always* use as an adjective modifying another word; *never* use as a noun standing alone  
*see also* churchwide ministries, churchwide organization

### **Churchwide Assembly**

capitalize when referring to a specific assembly, whether or not the year is included:

I attended the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

may lowercase and use only “assembly” upon subsequent reference:

Important decisions are made during the Churchwide Assembly. During the assembly... .

### **churchwide ministries**

references the programs, ministries, resources, services and initiatives of the ELCA’s churchwide expression; *preferred* if possible over “churchwide organization” because it shifts the focus from administration to mission

### **churchwide office**

*do not use*; reference should be to “churchwide ministries” or “churchwide organization”

### **churchwide organization**

lowercase; one of the three expressions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; this is the correct terminology for reference to the national and global ministries administrative offices of this church:

I work for the churchwide organization.

I work at the Lutheran Center.

*do not use* “I work at churchwide.” *or* “I work at the ELCA.”

### **church year**

lowercase

## **city of David**

*note* capitalization treatment

## **civilized/uncivilized**

*avoid*; use “traditional” or “cultural” instead: “traditional people,” “cultural practices”

## **clean up/cleanup**

two words when used as a verb; one word when used as a noun or adjective

## **clergy**

as distinct from laity; use also “pastor,” “members of the clergy,” “ordained minister”  
*avoid* “clergyman,” “clergywoman,” “clergyperson”

## **clergy titles**

- in formal running text, on first reference, use “the Rev. Jane M. Doe” (*note* use of the full name of the person); on subsequent reference, use “Pastor Doe”
- in more informal text, may use “Jane Doe, pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church,”
- in correspondence, use “The Rev. Jane M. Doe” in the address, and “Dear Pastor Doe” in the salutation
- lowercase “pastor” when used after the person’s name:  
The Rev. Jane M. Doe, pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, presided at worship Sunday.
- former ELCA bishops are referred to as simply “the Rev. Jane Doe”; they are not bishops for life
- *never* use “the Rev. Dr.” unless the doctorate is an earned degree
- using titles other than “pastor” for clergy of other denominations may be appropriate and preferred; consult with staff of Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations and Office of the Secretary if you have a question about the title of someone of another denomination

*see* AP Stylebook, “religious titles,” for usage  
*see also* bishop

## **co-**

hyphenate between this prefix and the word that follows when indicating occupation or status: “co-pastor,” “co-signer”; otherwise, do not hyphenate “coequal,” “coexist,” “cooperate,” “coordinate”

**colon**

capitalize the word following a colon only if it is a proper noun or begins a complete sentence; one space follows the colon; no space after the colon in a biblical citation

*see* AP Stylebook, "Punctuation"

**comma**

- with dates: in full dates, a comma follows the year:  
On Nov. 8, 1998, the Committee on the Rightful Place of Commas will meet.  
when only the month and year are listed, they appear without a comma, as in "November 1998" (*not* "November, 1998")
- with Junior, Senior, II, III: no comma is used between the surname of the individual and these designations:  
Benjamin V. Washington Jr., executive assistant to the bishop, met with us.  
Joseph J. Olson III, executive assistant to the bishop, was absent.
- with states and countries: a comma follows the name of a state in city-state or city in city-country references in text:  
The meeting was held in Columbus, Ohio, at Trinity Lutheran Seminary.  
They visited Geneva, Switzerland, while on their vacation in Europe.

*see also* AP Stylebook, "comma"

**comma in a series**

*see* serial punctuation

**commandment/Commandment(s)**

lowercase when referring to any general commandment:

That commandment is hard to keep.  
but capitalize when referring to the Ten Commandments as a whole or to a specific one: "the First Commandment," "the Commandments"

**Commandment, the Great**

as found in Matthew 22:37

**Commission, the Great**

as found in Matthew 28:19-20 or Mark 16:15

**communion/Communion**

lowercase when used as a general term: "the communion of saints," "my first communion"; capitalize when referring to the Christian

sacrament of receiving the body and blood of Christ: "Holy Communion," "Sacrament of Holy Communion"

**complement, compliment**

"complement" refers to something that completes or perfects another thing:

A dessert plate is a nice complement to a formal place setting.

"compliment" is an approving remark:

She paid me a nice compliment about my new suit.

**compline**

*see* night prayer

**compose, comprise**

"compose" means "to put together or create" or "to be made up of":

Mozart was known to compose as early as age 5.

The task force was composed of both clergy and lay people.

"comprise" means "to include":

Before he died at 35, Mozart's compositions would comprise over 40 symphonies.

**confession/Confession**

lowercase any creedal usage: "confessions of faith"; but capitalize when used as a short form for a specific document: "the Augsburg Confession," "the Westminster Confession" or "Lutheran Confessions"; also capitalize when used as a title in a liturgical setting: "Confession and Forgiveness"

**confirmation**

confirmation is the program that leads to Affirmation of Baptism; lowercase when used as a general term:

I am in my second year of confirmation class.

*see also* Affirmation of Baptism

**congregation**

one of the three expressions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;  
*note* references to "congregations of the ELCA" includes new mission starts

## **congregation-based organizing/ congregation-based community organizing**

hyphenate; “faith-based community organizing” is also acceptable

## **Congregation Council**

capitalize; this is the correct name for the governing bodies of ELCA congregations, according to the ELCA constitution; *do not use* “church council” or “Congregational Council”

## **congregational (adj.)**

*note* the “-al” ending when this lowercase term is used as an adjective:

The congregational vote was recorded in the minutes.

The annual congregational meeting was held last Sunday.

## **consecration**

lowercase; but capitalize when used in the title of the rite:

Consecration of Deaconesses and  
Diaconal Ministers

## **contractions**

*avoid* the use of contractions in official documents of this church

## **copyright**

the ELCA (not the unit) holds the copyright to any work produced by churchwide staff in the line of their job responsibilities; separately incorporated units of the ELCA may hold the copyright in their name:

Copyright © 20XX Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America.

Copyright © 20XX Women of the  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

## **council**

capitalize when writing “ELCA Church Council”; lowercase when referring to it subsequently: “the council”; follow a similar pattern for “Synod Council” and “Congregation Council”

## **Counter-Reformation**

reform movement in the Roman Catholic Church following the Protestant Reformation; also called the Catholic Reformation

## **courtesy titles (Mr., Mrs., Ms.)**

be consistent; either use courtesy titles for everyone or do not use at all; use “Mrs.” only if requested;

*prefer* “Ms.” for all females

## **covenant/Covenant**

*prefer* “books of the Old Testament”; lowercase when used as a theological concept: “Mosaic covenant”; but capitalize as a synonym for books of the Old Testament: “Old Covenant”

## **creation**

lowercase

## **creator/Creator**

capitalize when used as a synonym for God or part of a title in direct address: “our Creator”; otherwise lowercase: “God, creator of the universe”

## **credit lines, copyright language**

*see* Appendix 1 for appropriate credit lines to use when citing common resources

## **creed/Creed**

capitalize only when used as part of a title: “the Apostles’ Creed,” “the Nicene or Athanasian Creeds” or when the meaning is otherwise unclear; lowercase when referring to any generic creed:

“Do unto others ...” has become his  
creed.

## **cross**

lowercase

## **cross-cultural**

hyphenate

## **Crucified, the**

*note* capitalization treatment

## **Crucified One**

capitalize

## **crucifixion**

lowercase is *preferred*; capitalize only when the context does not make understanding clear

## **crusades/Crusades**

capitalize when referring to the Crusades of the Middle Ages; lowercase elsewhere

## dash

*the following is a summary of the “dash” entry from AP Stylebook, placed here for easy reference;*

AP Stylebook uses only one type of dash, the em dash; it is used in the following circumstances:

- abrupt change in thought or an emphatic pause;
- attribution at the end of a quotation, followed by the author’s name

*note:* a space both precedes and follows the dash; the dash in an online resource is represented by two hyphens

*exception* an en dash is used in some biblical citations which encompass more than one chapter *see* biblical references

## dates

- *always* use figures without the ending -st, -nd, -rd, or -th when writing dates: “Jan. 1, 2009” *not* “Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009”
- when the month and year are used alone, spell out the month and do not separate with a comma: “November 1998”
- when using a full date (month, date, year), or just month and date, abbreviate the months Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec.: “Nov. 2, 1998,” but “July 4, 2011”; and “Nov. 2” but “July 4”
- when using a full date (month, date, year) in the middle of a sentence, a comma follows the year:  
We will meet Nov. 2, 1998, at the hall.
- when using inclusive dates, may drop the century in the second reference: “1920-25,” “2009-10”
- when using inclusive dates with B.C. and A.D., use full year: “330-300 B.C.,” “A.D. 1900-1905”

*note:* B.C. follows the date; A.D. precedes it *see also* centuries; decades

## Day of Atonement

*note* capitalization treatment

## day of judgment

capitalize only when the meaning is otherwise unclear, or when it means the same as the Day of the Lord

## Day of the Lord

*note* capitalization treatment

## deaconess

one of the official lay rosters of the ELCA; lowercase unless referring to the Deaconess Community or as part of a person’s title: “Deaconess Ann Smith”

## Dead Sea Scrolls

Qumran literature

## deaf/Deaf

use “people who are deaf,” “hearing impaired,” “deaf people”; *do not use* “the deaf” or “hard of hearing”; “Deaf” is capitalized when referring to a culture of people; *note* that the same practice for capitalization *does not* hold for “blind” *see also* disability

## decades

use Arabic figures to indicate decades of history; use apostrophes to indicate numerals which are left out:

She composed during the '80s and '90s.  
*note* that if the first two numerals are omitted, only one apostrophe is used and is put before the numerals as in the example above. *Never* use an apostrophe before “s” in '90s when referring to years: “the '90s,” *not* “the '90's” or “1990's” *see also* centuries; dates

## decimals

for amounts less than 1, use the numeral zero before the decimal point: “0.3”

## definitely abled

used most commonly, but not exclusively, within Lutheran Youth Organization contexts; approved by that organization in 1997 for: 1) naming the Definitely Abled Advisory Committee and the Definitely Abled Youth Leadership Event, and 2) offering a new usage for the wider church and the world *see also* disability

## delegate

use only when referring to Women of the ELCA Triennial Convention; use “voting member” in the context of a Churchwide Assembly or a Synod Assembly

## Deutero-Isaiah

capitalize and hyphenate if used *prefer* “2 Isaiah”

**developing nation**

*do not use; see Third World nation*

**devil**

lowercase

**diaconal**

one of the three lay, rosters of the ELCA, the other two being deaconess and associate in ministry;  
*see also* diaconal minister

**diaconal minister**

member of one of the three lay rosters of the ELCA; diaconal ministers work within congregational settings to seek wholeness in the world and to help the people of God to live out the gospel; lowercase in running copy

**“diakonia”**

*avoid* usage in public documents; Greek word describing the concept of unconditional service to the neighbor in need; leads inevitably to social change that restores, reforms and transforms  
*note:* it is *not* placed in quotation marks when used in reference to the team within the Global Mission unit

**dialogue**

in a liturgy, brief phrases or sentences used responsively between leader and assembly; especially, the three-part dialogue that begins the Great Thanksgiving:

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

*see also* Great Thanksgiving, the

**diaspora/Diaspora**

capitalize when referring to the dispersion of the Jews after the Babylonian exile; otherwise, lowercase

**different from**

use instead of “different than”

**differently abled**

*see* definitely abled

**disability**

general term for a permanent or semipermanent condition that may interfere with a person’s capability to do something independently; all references should reflect that the person is more important than the condition; refer to “people with disabilities” *not* “the disabled”; refer to the specific condition whenever possible: “people who are deaf,” *not* “the deaf”; “people who are blind,” *not* “the blind”

**disciples, the**

lowercase: “the 12 disciples”; but capitalize “the Twelve”

*see also* apostle

**Disaster Appeal**

*do not use; prefer* “ELCA Disaster Response”

*see also* Appendix 2 for ELCA Disaster Response and ELCA World Hunger Style Sheet

**disaster relief**

*do not use; prefer* “ELCA Disaster Response”

*see also* Appendix 2 for ELCA Disaster Response and ELCA World Hunger Style Sheet

**disease**

refer to “people with cancer” or “people living with cancer,” “people living with Alzheimer’s disease”; *do not use* “victim”; all references should reflect that the person is more important than the condition

**divine/Divine**

capitalize when used as a synonym for God: “the Divine”; but lowercase otherwise: “divine grace”

**Down syndrome**

*not* Down’s syndrome

**down, up (travel)**

*see* up and down (travel)

**doxology/Doxology**

an ascription of praise to the Trinity; capitalize only when used as a title of a particular piece of music: “Common Doxology”

**each other, one another**

if referring to only two people:

They look at each other.

if more than two people:

They look at one another.

use either one for an indefinite number:

We will help each other.

We will help one another.

### **e-Advocacy Network**

network of people within the ELCA whose purpose is to empower members to advocate for peace, justice and care of creation; *note* capitalization treatment

### **Easter cycle, the**

*note* capitalization treatment

### **Easter Day**

capitalize

### **Easter Vigil**

Holy Saturday night celebration of the resurrection; first celebration of Easter

### **effect**

*see* affect/effect

### **e.g.**

*note* punctuation; *also always* followed by a comma; Latin for “*exempli gratia*,” means “for the sake of an example”; often the phrase beginning with *e.g.*, is put in parentheses

We visited several important buildings while in Washington, D.C., (*e.g.*, the Lincoln Memorial and the Capitol building).

often confused with *i.e.*

*see* *i.e.*

### **either ... or, neither ... nor**

*not* “neither ... or” or “either ... nor”

### **ELCA**

*see* Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

### **ELCA Campus Ministry**

singular, *not* “... Ministries,” for the name of the program; but the ministries on campuses may be referred to as “campus ministries,” using lowercase and plural form

### **ELCA Disaster Response**

*see* Appendix 2 for ELCA Disaster Response and ELCA World Hunger Style Sheet

### **ELCA Good Gifts**

*do not* refer to the program as simply “Good Gifts” as that is a trademark registered with a different organization; lowercase “catalog” when referring to the ELCA Good Gifts catalog resource

### **ELCA.org**

official website of the ELCA

*note* capitalization treatment; use “@elca.org” for email addresses, but “ELCA.org” (no need to add “www” when referencing the site itself in promotional copy)

### **ELCA Outdoor Ministry**

singular, *not* “... Ministries,” for the name of the program; but the camps, retreats and conference centers may be referred to as “outdoor ministries,” using lowercase and plural form

### **ELCA World Hunger and Disaster Appeal**

*do not use in external resource contexts; only acceptable use is for internal communication*, when referring in a broad sense to the fundraising arm which includes both ELCA World Hunger and ELCA Disaster Response (International and Domestic)

*see also* Appendix 2 for ELCA Disaster Response and ELCA World Hunger Style Sheet

### **ELCA Youth Gathering**

may use “the Gathering” (capitalized) on subsequent reference

*do not use* “National Gathering” or simply “Youth Gathering”

### **ELCA Youth Ministry**

singular, *not* “... Ministries” for the name of the program; lowercase if referring to “youth ministry” in other contexts

### **elderly**

*prefer* “older adult”; use the word “elderly” sparingly; usage may be appropriate in generic phrases that do not refer to specific individuals: “a home for the elderly,” “elder hostel,” “elder care”

### **ellipsis**

three dots used to indicate, in quoted copy, that some material was purposely left out;

- in general, treat an ellipsis as a three-letter word, constructed with three periods and two spaces:

“Therefore we are to ... gladly act according to his commandments.”

- if the quoted material before the ellipsis makes a complete sentence, place a period at the end of that text before the space and the ellipsis:  
“I am the Lord your God. ... I the Lord your God am a jealous God.”
- if the quoted material before the ellipsis does not make a complete sentence, retain any punctuation which may follow the last word before the material being left out:  
“Our Father in heaven, ... now and forever. Amen.”

### **email**

*do not* hyphenate; capitalize only if it occurs at the beginning of a sentence;

- for email addresses, use roman type, not italic in all instances
- email addresses are not case sensitive; use lowercase for all letters
- when the email address breaks at the end of a line of copy, do not add any punctuation, such as a hyphen, lest that mark be taken as part of the address:  
I check this email box daily (sam.doe@yahoo.com), so please use that address.
- *always use* ending punctuation if address falls at the end of a sentence:  
Please contact me at this email address: samantha\_doe@yahoo.com.  
do not add a space between the email address and the ending punctuation

### **emblem**

part of the brandmark of the ELCA; graphic representation of the ELCA mission statement (Marked with the cross of Christ forever, we are claimed, gathered and sent for the sake of the world.) by means of a four-color-quadrant orb with a black cross dividing the quadrants  
*see also* brandmark

### **Emmanuel**

translates from Hebrew as “God-with-us”; may be used instead of “Immanuel”

### **en and em dashes**

*see* dash

### **end time(s)**

lowercase

### **e-newsletter**

an electronic communication sent to a specific audience on a regular basis (e.g., daily, weekly, monthly); title of the e-newsletter should be set in roman without quotation marks; punctuation and capitalization to vary according to style of the communication

### **ensure, insure**

“ensure” is to make certain or guarantee;  
“insure” is to protect with insurance

### **entitled**

to enable to seek or claim something:

She is entitled to her opinion.

*do not use* in relation to a title; use “titled” instead:

The book was titled “Curious George.”

### **epiphany/Epiphany**

capitalize when referring to the festival on Jan. 6: “the Epiphany of Our Lord,” “Epiphany season,” “time after Epiphany”; but

The travelers on the road to Emmaus experienced an epiphany when Christ revealed himself to them.

### **Episcopal Church, The**

a full communion partner with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; *note* that “The” is part of the incorporated name and must be capitalized

### **Episcopal (adj.)/Episcopalian (n.)**

capitalize unless referring in general to a body governed by bishops

She is an Episcopal priest. (adj.)

Joseph is an Episcopalian. (n.)

but

The episcopal gathering met in closed session.

### **epistle/Epistle**

lowercase for general usage as in: “the epistle,” “this epistle,” “Paul’s epistles”; but capitalize when referring to the title of a book or a specific section: “the Epistle to the Romans,” “the Epistles”; in liturgical reference, use “second reading”

### **eschaton**

the end times; last days



## **Eskimo**

*do not use*

*see* Alaska Native

## **eternal Father**

*note* capitalization treatment

## **etc.**

*avoid* usage if it is possible to be more specific

## **eternal Lord**

*note* capitalization treatment

## **ethnic, national and racial group references**

- *avoid* using the term “minority” when referring to ethnic, national or racial groups;
- usage of the cultural-ethnic background of people is preferred rather than reference to categories of color; this affirms the rich ethnic traditions from which people have come rather than simply indicating skin color or a perceived skin color;
- take care when using terms that identify people by their skin color, ethnicity or nation of origin; each group of people has its own history, culture and heritage; because members of some ethnic groups use different terms when referring to themselves, if possible ask them how they would like to be identified

*see* individual racial group entries for guidelines

## **eucharist/Eucharist**

the celebration of the word of God and the meal of bread and wine; capitalize only when referring to the title of the specific rite in a publication, often accompanied by a source citation; “communion” or “Holy Communion” is often *preferred*

## **eucharistic**

lowercase

## **evangelical/Evangelical**

lowercase is *preferred*; capitalize when it refers to a specific group or party

## **Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

the largest Lutheran denomination in the United States; organized in three expressions: congregations, synods and the churchwide organization; also the only Lutheran denomination

in the United States that is a part of The Lutheran World Federation; the acronym (ELCA) may be used after first reference; this acronym is the primary acronym in all related documents and is the only one generally allowed  
*see also* acronyms; churchwide organization; congregation; synod

## **Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land**

acronym is ELCJHL and is acceptable only if reference is used more than twice in the document; work around if possible to avoid the acronym

## **“Evangelical Lutheran Worship”**

*note* title style; do not preface with the article “the”:

We are exploring “Evangelical Lutheran Worship” in adult education class.

acronym (ELW) is permissible only when it precedes hymn numbers in publications that contain lists of hymns or refer to both liturgical pages and hymn numbers, such as:

ELW 347

ELW, p. 252

## **evangelist**

lowercase when referring to a writer of a Gospel: “the evangelist Mark”; but capitalize in the title of a festival: “Mark, Evangelist”

## **evening prayer/Evening Prayer**

*preferred* term for “vespers”; capitalize only when referring to the title for the specific service, especially if followed by page number or book title

## **everyone, every one**

*see* anyone, any one; everyone, every one; someone, some one

## **exile, the**

capitalize only when the meaning is otherwise unclear

## **exodus, the**

capitalize only when referring to the book of Exodus or when the meaning is otherwise unclear

## **fair trade**

lowercase, no hyphen; but hyphenate when used as a combined adjective: “fair-trade coffee”

**faith-based community organizing**

hyphenate; “congregation-based organizing” or “congregation-based community organizing” are also permissible

**fall, the**

capitalize only when the meaning is otherwise unclear

**fall from grace**

lowercase

**farther, further**

“farther” describes greater physical distance:

He was farther along the woodland trail than I.

“further” refers to time or greater degree:

Further research will need to be done.

**Father**

capitalize when it refers to the first person of the Trinity

**Father’s Day**

capitalize and use apostrophe appropriately

**feast day**

general term for festivals, lesser festivals or commemorations; lowercase

**festival**

generally lowercase: “festival of Transfiguration”

**fewer, less**

“fewer” applies to countable items: “fewer people,” “fewer products”;

“less” applies to bulk or mass measurements or abstract concepts: “less grain,” “less heat,” “less happiness”

**final judgment**

lowercase; *note* British spelling has a second “e” (“judgement”)

**first fruits**

lowercase

**flier, flyer**

“flier” is an airline pilot or a printed circular; use capitalized “Flyer” only as part of a proper name for some train and bus lines:

Amtrak’s Philadelphia Flyer leaves Chicago at noon daily.

**flood, the**

capitalize only when the meaning is otherwise unclear

**follow up, follow-up**

“follow up” (two words) is a verb:

He said we could follow up at the next meeting.

hyphenate in noun and adjective usages:

The follow-up took all afternoon.

He promised to do a follow-up session at the next meeting.

**font**

basin or pool holding water for baptism; may use “baptismal font” for clarity

**for example**

*see e.g.*

**for-profit**

hyphenate when used as an adjective

*see also* nonprofit

**foreign language words or phrases**

place the word or phrase in quotation marks and provide the English translation in parentheses

**foreigner**

*avoid*; use “international guest/student” or “visitor” instead

**full communion**

do not hyphenate:

The Episcopal Church is in full communion with the ELCA.

The United Methodist Church is one of the ELCA’s full communion partners.

The correct names of the ELCA’s six full communion partners are:

- The Episcopal Church
- Moravian Church in America
- Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
- Reformed Church in America
- United Church of Christ
- United Methodist Church

*see also* specific church body entries

**full time**

if used as a noun, it is two words:

She works full time.

as an adjective, it should be hyphenated:

The company has 99 full-time employees.

**fundamentalism (n.)****fundamentalist (n., adj.)****fundraiser, fundraising**

*never* hyphenate

**furlough**

*avoid*; use “home leave” instead

**further**

*see* farther, further

**Garden of Eden**

*note* capitalization treatment; but “the garden”

**Garden of Gethsemane**

*note* capitalization treatment; but “the garden”

**gay (adj.)**

*preferred* usage for reference to males with same-gender sexual orientation; never used as a noun

*see also* LGBT

**gentile (n., adj.)**

lowercase unless capitalized in original quoted source

**girl**

use only for females under age 12

*see* adult; woman; young adult; youth

**global mission**

*note* that this is *not* used as a plural noun, “global missions”; other global mission terminology includes ELCA Missionary Sponsorship, Global Gifts; *do not use* as a unit name in any outward-facing document when referring to the global mission of the ELCA.

**“glocal”**

describes the intersection of global and local work; in the ELCA, *avoid usage* in public documents; use other terminology that is more readily understood; use exclusively as it relates to the work of the Global Mission unit; prefer the use of

quotation marks so the reader knows it is not a misspelling

**god/God**

capitalize only when referring to the Judeo-Christian God; lowercase when it refers to pagan or mythological figures

*see* gods and goddesses

**God Almighty**

capitalize

**God Incarnate**

capitalize

**godlike**

lowercase, no hyphen

**godliness/godly**

lowercase

**God Most High**

capitalize

**gods and goddesses**

lowercase when referring to false gods, mythological gods and pagan gods:

Chemosh was the national god of the Moabites.

Diana was the Roman goddess of the moon.

**Godspeed**

capitalize

**God-with-us**

the translation for “Emmanuel” or “Immanuel”

**golden rule**

lowercase

**Good Friday**

capitalize

**Good News**

capitalize only when referring to any or all of the four Gospels in the New Testament

**good/Good Samaritan**

lowercase “good” when referring to the man in the biblical parable: “the good Samaritan”;

capitalize “Good” only when referring to a type of person or used as metaphor:

She’s a Good Samaritan.

They passed a Good Samaritan law.

### **Good Shepherd**

capitalize when referring to Jesus Christ

### **gospel/Gospel**

lowercase when used as a general term meaning “good news” or “story” of Jesus Christ; when referring to the law and the gospel; when referring to the third reading in the service: “gospel acclamation,” “gospel responses”; capitalize when used as a specific reference to any or all of the four New Testament Gospels: “the four Gospels,” “the Holy Gospel,” “the Gospel of Matthew”; when used as a title of a document: “Gospel of Thomas,” “Synoptic Gospels,” “the Fourth Gospel (John)”; when referring to a section of the Bible: “the Gospels”

### **grass roots**

when used as noun, two words; in adjectival usage, hyphenate: “grass-roots movement”

### **Great Commandment, the**

as found in Matthew 22:37

### **Great Commission, the**

as found in Matthew 28:19–20; Mark 16:15

### **Great Thanksgiving, the**

in the communion service, the body of actions and words beginning with the three-part dialogue and concluding with the Lord’s Prayer  
*see also* dialogue

### **Hades**

capitalize

### **hallelujah/Hallelujah!**

capitalize when used as an interjection

### **handicap**

*do not use* to describe a disability; do not refer to people with disabilities as “the handicapped” or “handicapped people”  
*see* disability

### **Hanukkah**

this is the *preferred* spelling

### **Head of the church, the**

capitalize “Head” when the phrase refers to Christ

### **headlines, style of**

generally headlines in all resources should be styled with first word and all proper nouns capitalized, all other words lowercase

### **heaven**

lowercase

### **Hebrew**

the Semitic language of the ancient Hebrews, or any of various later forms of the language; a member of or a descendent from one of a group of northern Semitic peoples, including the Israelites

### **hell**

lowercase

### **high church/low church**

*avoid* using; instead describe the service and what happened during it

### **high priest**

lowercase

### **high priesthood (n.)**

lowercase

### **high priestly prayer**

lowercase; as found in John 17

### **higher power**

lowercase

### **Hispanic**

*do not use*

*see* Latino

### **historic, historical**

an important or famous event is “historic”: “historic battle,” “historic speech”; any event of, or relating to, history is “historical”: “historical novel,” “historical data”; both words are preceded by “a,” *not* “an”

### **historical-critical method**

hyphenate

**HIV**

acronym for human immunodeficiency virus:  
“person who is HIV-positive”; use all caps, no periods  
*prefer* “HIV and AIDS” *do not use* “HIV/AIDS”  
*note*: HIV-positive people do not necessarily also have AIDS  
*see also* AIDS

**Holy Baptism**

*see* baptism

**Holy Bible**

capitalize

**holy city**

lowercase when referring to a city that is the center of religious worship and traditions: “the holy city of Mecca”

**Holy Communion**

*see* communion

**Holy Eucharist**

*see* eucharist

**holy family**

lowercase

**holy Father**

capitalize “holy” only when referring to the title of the pope in the Roman Catholic Church

**Holy Ghost**

*do not use*  
*see* Holy Spirit

**Holy Land**

capitalize when referring to historical or current Israel

**Holy One**

capitalize

**Holy Scripture**

*prefer* “Bible”

**holy Son**

*note* capitalization treatment

**Holy Spirit**

capitalize when referring to the third person of the Trinity

**Holy Trinity, the**

*note* capitalization treatment

**holy water**

lowercase

**Holy Week**

the time from the Sunday of the Passion (Palm Sunday) until the beginning of the Maundy Thursday liturgy

**Holy Writ**

*do not use*; arcane

**homeless**

use only as an adjective; “people who are homeless”

**homosexual**

*do not use*  
*see* gay, lesbian, LGBT

**hopefully**

means “in a hopeful manner”:

I waited hopefully for a cab.

*do not use* to mean “it is hoped,” “let us hope” or “we hope”; use those phrases instead:

We hope to finish the draft by early April.

*not* “Hopefully, we will finish the draft by... .”

**hosanna/Hosanna!**

capitalize when used as interjection

**house church**

lowercase

**house of God**

*note* capitalization treatment

**humankind**

*preferred* over “mankind” unless quoting from an original source

**hymn text, text of a hymn**

use instead of “lyrics”

## hymn titles

in lists of hymns and when hymn titles are written out in a worship folder, quotation marks are *not* necessary:

ELW 558 Lord God We Praise You

ELW 572 Now It Is Evening

for capitalization, follow original source

## hyphen

*see* dash, hyphen

*see also* AP Stylebook, “Punctuation”

## i.e.

abbreviation for Latin “id est” or “that is; in other words”; *note* punctuation; *always* followed by a comma; expression is usually put in parentheses

Today is the first day of the Lenten

season (i.e., Ash Wednesday).

often confused with e.g.

*see also* e.g.

## illegal aliens

*do not use*; preferred reference is to “undocumented people” or “refugees”

## “imago Dei”

use quotation marks; translates from Latin as “image of God”

## Immanuel

translates from Hebrew as “God-with-us”; may be used instead of “Emmanuel”

## in, into, in to

“in” indicates location:

Elvis is in the building.

“into” indicates motion:

Elvis walked into the building.

“in” can also be part of a phrasal verb:

Elvis broke in to the building.

## incarnate

lowercase “incarnate” when it is used as an adjective: “incarnate Word”; but capitalize it when used as a name for Jesus: “Word Incarnate”

## Incarnate Word of God

capitalize when used as a name for Jesus

## incarnation

capitalize only when the meaning is otherwise unclear

## Indian

use only for a person from India

*see* American Indian for proper usage when reference is to indigenous people of North America

## initials, treatment of

when part of a name, use periods and no spaces: “C.S. Lewis”

## installation

lowercase; but capitalize when used in the title of the rite: “Rite of Installation”

## insure

*see* ensure, insure

## inter

in general, do not hyphenate after this prefix;

*exception*: “Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations”

*see* prefix

## interface (n.)

*do not use* as a verb

## Internet

capitalize; a decentralized, worldwide network of computers that can communicate with each other; the World Wide Web is a subset of the Internet, not a synonym for it; may use “the Net” for subsequent references

## interunit

do not hyphenate

## intranet

a private network for use within a company; lowercase

## Inuit

one of numerous Alaska Native people; indigenous people of southwestern Alaska  
*see also* Alaska Native

## Inupiat

one of numerous Alaska Native people; indigenous people of southern Alaska and the Seward Peninsula; many ELCA members in Alaskan congregations are Inupiat  
*see also* Alaska Native

## Islam

the name of the religion; “Muslim” refers to a person who adheres to Islamic practices

## Israelite

a descendent of the Old Testament man named Israel, who was later renamed Jacob; a native or inhabitant of the ancient Northern Kingdom of Israel

## its, it’s

“its” is a possessive pronoun:

The ELCA has changed its landmark.

“it’s” is the contraction of “it is”:

It’s going to rain.

## Jesus’

possessive form for “Jesus”

## Jew

*do not use* unless referring to the first people living in Judah when the Israelites were divided into the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah; after the Babylonian Captivity, all descendants of Abraham were called Jews; because the Jews were God’s chosen people, Paul sometimes spoke of a true Jew as being anyone who pleases God  
*note:* it is inaccurate to use as a blanket term for those who doubted or persecuted Jesus  
*see* Jewish people

## Jewish people

use when referring to the contemporary situation;  
*do not use* “the Jews”

## judges/Judges

capitalize only when referring to the book in the Bible

## judgment day

capitalize only when the meaning is otherwise unclear

*note* British spelling has an second “e” (“judgement”)

## junior, senior

no comma between the last name of the individual and the abbreviation “Jr.” “Sr.” or a generation indicator such as “III”:

Martin Luther King Jr.

John F. Kennedy Sr.

John Anderson III

## King of kings

*note* capitalization treatment

## kingdom of God

*note* capitalization treatment

## kingdom of heaven

lowercase

## Koran/Qur’an

Muslim holy book; *preferred* spelling is “Quran” except when another form is preferred by an organization or in a specific title or name

## laity

*preferred;* use instead of “laymen,” “laywomen,” “layperson”; also acceptable: “laypeople”

## Lamb of God

*note* capitalization treatment

## Large Catechism

do not place in quotation marks unless referring to the title of a specific publication

## last judgment

lowercase

*note* British spelling has a second “e” (“judgement”)

## Last Supper

capitalize

## Latino (m. or collective); Latina (f.)

*preferred* over “Hispanic”; use a more specific identification when possible, such as Cuban, Puerto Rican or Mexican American; because members of some ethnic groups use different terms when referring to themselves, if possible ask them how they would like to be identified

## law/Law

lowercase in “God’s law,” “law and gospel”; but capitalize in “the Law of Moses” (meaning the first five books of the Old Testament); *always* capitalize when referring to Torah: “the Law”

## lay, lie

“lay” always requires a direct object:

I will lay the paper down while I eat.

“lie” means to recline or to tell an untruth:

I will lie down for a rest.

What he told me was a lie.  
*see also* AP Stylebook, “lay, lie”

### **layman/laywoman/layperson**

“laity” is *preferred*

### **lay reader**

lowercase

### **lead/led**

*note* past tense of “lead” is “led”:

The decision by the group led to a new way of operating.

### **lectern**

“ambo” is often *preferred* in liturgical usage

### **lectionary/Lectionary**

book containing the full texts of Scripture readings for proclamation in the liturgy; capitalize only when used within a title: “the Revised Common Lectionary”

### **Lent/Lenten**

capitalize

### **lesbian (n., adj.)**

*preferred* usage for reference to females with same-gender sexual orientation  
*see also* gay, LGBT

### **less**

*see* fewer, less

### **lesser festivals**

days on the calendar celebrating the life of Christ and other people or events:

The commemoration of Stephen, the first martyr, on Dec. 26 is a lesser festival.

### **lesson**

“reading” is *preferred*

### **letter/Letter**

capitalize when referring to the title of a biblical book or specific section: “Letter to the Romans”; but “the letter Paul sent to Rome,” “this letter”

### **LGBT**

acronym for “lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender”; can be used upon first instance without full explanation especially in headlines, if

the audience will understand the usage; *preferred* because it indicates the diversity of the community  
*note* also the following usages: “gay man”; “bisexual woman or man”; “transgender person”

### **lie, lay**

*see* “lay, lie”

*see also* AP Stylebook, “lay, lie”

### **life-giving**

*note* hyphenation

### **lifelong**

one word, no hyphen

a lifelong learning program

### **lifesaving**

one word, no hyphen

### **Light of lights**

capitalize “Light” when referring to Christ

### **Light of the world**

capitalize “Light” when referring to Christ

### **like**

*see* as, like

### **lists in running text**

There are three types:

1. The list starts as the beginning of a sentence and is followed by a set of phrases that each assists in completing the sentence. Use a colon; bullets, numbers or symbols; lowercase the word following the bullet unless it’s a proper noun; end each bullet with a semicolon and insert the word “and” before the final bullet. End the last bullet with a period.

Example:

This corporation:

- provides moral and spiritual guidance;
- creates and supports community-based educational programs; and
- offers a forum for participants to apply their expertise in ways that will help this church.

2. The list is like a “grocery” list. Use a colon; bullets, numbers or symbols; lowercase/capitalize as needed, but no period is necessary. Example:



Include the following information:

- name
- address
- day and night phone numbers
- spouse's name
- Social Security number

3. The list contains bulleted items that are complete sentences. Use a colon; bullets, numbers or symbols; capitalize the beginning of each bulleted sentence and end each with a period. Example:

With your own illustrations, show how:

- Listening is active.
- Attitude is important.
- Silence is golden.

*note:* some of the bulleted lists in this style guide do not follow these rules, because of this guide's style of citing examples; if necessary, see Chicago Manual of Style for additional samples of lists

## **liturgy**

the words and actions that form the worship of the Christian assembly

## **living God**

*note* capitalization treatment

## **living Lord**

*note* capitalization treatment

## **LivingLutheran.com**

the multiauthor blogging site of the ELCA; use when referring to the name of the website as opposed to the URL [www.livinglutheran.com](http://www.livinglutheran.com)

## **living Word**

*note* capitalization treatment

## **login, log in/on/out/off**

use as one word ("login") for the noun:

My login doesn't work.

use as two words ("log in," "log out") for the verb:

You will need to log in first.

Don't forget to log out before you leave.

## **logo**

*do not use* in reference to ELCA branding; use "brandmark" instead

*see* brandmark

## **Logos**

capitalize when referring to Christ

## **loose, lose**

"loose" (n.) means "unrestrained":

The wild horse got loose from its handlers at the rodeo.

"lose" (v.) means "to be unable to find or maintain" or "to be deprived of":

Too many people will lose their houses in the mortgage fiasco.

## **Lord**

capitalize

## **LORD**

in small caps, indicates the English translation of the Hebrew letters YHWH; use small caps only if they are used in the original source

## **Lord of lords**

*note* capitalization treatment

## **Lord's day**

Sunday

## **lordship of God**

*note* capitalization treatment

## **Lord's Prayer**

capitalize

## **Lord's Supper**

used as a synonym for communion

## **lose**

*see* loose, lose

## **loving-kindness**

hyphenate

## **low church, high church**

*avoid* using; instead describe the service and what happened during it

## **"Lutheran Book of Worship"**

use quotation marks per title style; do not preface with the article "the":

We are exploring "Lutheran Book of Worship" in adult education class.

Acronym (LBW) in roman type may be used only when preceding hymn numbers in publications

that contain lists of hymns or refer to both liturgical pages and hymn numbers:

LBW 347

LBW, p. 252

### **Lutheran Center, the**

the building that houses the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; should *not* be referred to as “the ELCA”

### **Lutheran church**

*note* capitalization treatment; capitalize “Church” only as part of a corporate title: “Faith Lutheran Church”

### **Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, The**

use an em dash when spelling out the denominational name

*note:* if reference is to the legally or formally incorporated body, “The” should be included as part of name and should be capitalized

### **Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service**

*note* that the name is *not* “... Services”

### **Lutheran social ministry organizations**

when referring to a group of them, capitalize only “Lutheran”

### **Lutheran World Federation, The**

international association of Lutheran churches of which there are 70 million members; the ELCA is the only Lutheran denomination in the United States that belongs to the federation

*note* that “The” is part of the name and should be capitalized and included in legal or formal references

### **Lutheran World Relief**

*not* “the Lutheran World Relief”

### **lyrics**

*prefer* “hymn text,” “text of a hymn”

### **magi**

use instead of “wise men”

### **major prophets/Major Prophets**

capitalize when referring to the section of the Bible that includes Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel and Daniel:

The next portion of Scripture that we will study is the Major Prophets.

lowercase when referring to a person:

Isaiah was one of the five major prophets.

### **man**

use for any adult male

*see also* adult; boy; young adult; youth

### **man of sorrows**

capitalize only when the meaning is otherwise unclear

### **mass/Mass, the**

capitalize when referring to the religious ceremony:

Father Burns celebrated the Mass at 8:00 a.m. yesterday.

but lowercase when referring to a musical setting of the Mass:

J.S. Bach wrote a mass setting in B minor.

### **matins**

*see* morning prayer

### **Maundy Thursday**

capitalize

### **means of grace**

in Lutheran usage, the word of God and the sacraments through which God’s grace comes to people

### **messages, ELCA**

messages of the ELCA:

- are built on its social policy;
- draw attention to certain priority concerns that arise from its mission in the world and encourage discussion and action;
- address the contemporary situation in light of the prophetic and compassionate traditions of the Bible;
- are adopted by the ELCA Church Council; and
- express the convictions of the leaders of the church

messages of the ELCA appear in copy in quotation marks, *not* italics; they include:

“Message on AIDS”

“Message on Changing Europe”

“Message on Commercial Sexual Exploitation”  
“Message on Community Violence”  
“Message on End of Life Decisions”  
“Message on Homelessness”  
“Message on Immigration”  
“Message on Israeli/Palestinian Conflict”  
“Message on Sexuality”  
“Message on Suicide Prevention”  
“Message on Terrorism”

### **messiah/Messiah**

capitalize only when used as a name for Christ or referring to an eschatological figure in Judaism or Christianity:

The Messiah was born in Bethlehem.

but

He had a messiah complex.

### **messianic**

lowercase

### **messianic age**

lowercase

### **Methodist Church**

*see* United Methodist Church

### **Mexican American**

do not hyphenate (*exception* to AP Stylebook);  
U.S. citizens of Mexican descent

*see also* Latino

### **Middle East, Mideast, Near East**

“Middle East” is *preferred*; “Mideast” is also acceptable

### **midrash/Midrash**

“midrashim” (plural); Hebrew term for “explanation” or “exposition”; capitalize when referring to a collection of writings; otherwise, lowercase

### **microfinancing**

*note* that this term is *not* hyphenated

### **microlending**

*note* that this term is *not* hyphenated

### **microloan**

*note* that this term is *not* hyphenated

### **millennium (n.)**

millennia (plural)

### **minister**

collectively, “clergy” is the proper term; *avoid* implying that only men are clergy; in reference to “minister” as a pastor, use “ordained minister,” in contrast to the various forms of rostered lay service, specifically: “associates in ministry,” “deaconesses” and “diaconal ministers”  
*see also* clergy titles

### **minority**

*do not use* when referring to racial groups

### **minor prophets/Minor Prophets**

capitalize when referring to the section of the Bible:

The twelve books in the Minor Prophets section of the Bible are Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

lowercase when referring to a person:

Amos was one of the minor prophets.

### **“missio Dei”**

use with quotation marks; translates from Latin as “sending of God”

### **missionary**

*prefer* referencing a specific job instead: “teachers in China,” “translators in Ethiopia”

Jack, who works in animal husbandry in Nigeria, is a missionary supported by our congregation.

*do not use* “mission personnel”

### **Mission Support (n.)**

portion of congregational offerings that is shared with the synod and churchwide organization to support ministries in those expressions of the ELCA

*note* when associated with the ELCA, this term is a proper noun, and is therefore capitalized; it is never hyphenated:

Mission Support enables the ELCA to do its work.

### **mission to**

*avoid*; use “mission with” instead

The ELCA is in mission with companion churches throughout the world.

**missional**

*avoid* usage in public documents; describe what is meant in clear adjectival terms instead  
*exception:* Missional Leadership Centers

**Missional Leadership Centers**

formerly know as “mission schools;” name changed because of the historical negative connotation  
*exception* to the usage of “missional”

**modern-day (adj.)**

hyphenate when used as an adjective to modify a noun: “modern-day usage,” “modern-day Germany”

**Mohammed**

*do not use;* use “Muhammad” instead

**month**

- when using a full date (month, date, year), abbreviate the months Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec.: “Nov. 2, 1998”
- when the month and year are used alone, spell out and do not separate with a comma: “November 1998”

**Moravian Church in America**

the Southern and Northern Provinces, Eastern West Indies Province and the Alaska Province of the Moravian Church in America are full communion partners with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

**more than, over**

“more than” is used with figures:

There were more than 10 banners at the installation.

“over” is used in spatial relationships:

The banners hung over the center of the sanctuary.

**morning prayer/Morning Prayer**

*preferred* term for “matins”; capitalize only when referring to the title for the service of Morning Prayer, especially if followed by page number or book title

**Moses’**

possessive form for “Moses”

**Moslem**

*do not use;* use “Muslim” instead

**Most High**

*note* capitalization

**Most High God**

*note* capitalization

**Mother’s Day**

*note* capitalization and apostrophe treatment

**Mr., Mrs., Ms.**

*see* courtesy titles

**Muhammad**

*preferred;* *do not use* “Mohammed”

**multicultural**

*do not* hyphenate

**Muslim**

*do not use* “Moslem”; Muslim refers to people who adhere to the religion called Islam

**myself**

*use only* when reflexive:

I gave myself a pat on the back.

*not* “The speakers will be Rachel and myself.”

**national groups**

*see* ethnic, national and racial group references

**Native American**

*prefer* “American Indian”; or if possible use the name of the nation:

He is a Hopi commissioner.

James Shepherd, Laguna, spoke at the Indigenous Institute.

because members of some ethnic groups use different terms when referring to themselves, if possible ask how they would like to be identified

**nativity/Nativity**

capitalize in liturgical contexts:

the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord

otherwise lowercase:

There were probably donkeys at the nativity of Christ.

**neither ... nor, either ... or**

*do not use* “neither ... or” or “either ... nor”

## **new Adam**

*note* capitalization treatment

## **new covenant**

*avoid* this term except in the words of institution within the Great Thanksgiving in a liturgy; rewrite for clarity of meaning;

*prefer* “New Testament”

## **New Jerusalem**

capitalize

## **New Revised Standard Version, the**

*preferred* version of the Bible for use in ELCA; abbreviated in second and subsequent references as “NRSV”; if it is necessary, in a particular context, to quote from another version of the Bible, reasoning for this deviation from the standard should be provided when the document is submitted to Marketing Communications team for editorial review as well as an indication of which version is being used

*see also* Appendix 1 for appropriate credit lines for various versions of the Bible

## **New Testament**

capitalize

## **Nicene Creed, the**

capitalize; but lowercase “creed” when using the short form in subsequent references: “the creed”

## **night prayer/Night Prayer**

*preferred* term for “compline”; daily prayer service for use at the end of the day, just prior to retiring for the night; capitalize only when referring to the title for the service of Night Prayer, especially if followed by page number or book title

## **Ninety-five Theses**

*note* capitalization treatment when used as a title:  
Read Luther’s “Ninety-five Theses” for our next class session.

but use numerals when used as a general term:  
He nailed 95 theses to the door.

## **nonprofit**

no hyphen

## **nonrestrictive and restrictive clauses**

*see* that, which

## **nonsexist language**

- *avoid* using terms that unnecessarily specify someone’s gender, such as “chairman” or “prophetess”; in most cases, “chair” or “prophet” can be used instead; *exception to* AP Stylebook
- *avoid* sexism by using nongender-specific language such as “humanity” or “humankind” instead of “mankind,” except when directly quoting from an original source

## **numbers/numerals**

- *never* begin a sentence with a numeral; spell out a number at the beginning of a sentence
- spell out the first nine cardinal and ordinal numbers when used in text:  
He walked nine miles.  
There were eight applicants.  
She was the sixth spelling bee contestant.  
The game ended in the fifth inning.
- use figures for numbers above nine:  
The table was set for 10.  
There were 50 in the audience.  
They own 63 horses.
- these “spell out” and “use figures” rules above *do not apply* to ages, figures in headlines, figures containing decimals, statistics, results of voting, percentages, sums of money, times of day, days of month, latitude and longitude, degrees of temperature, dimension, measurements and proportion, numbers that are part of titles, or sports points
- spell out large numbers:  
They planned to raise \$2 million.
- with four digits, use a comma in the number, as in “2,000,” except in reference to a year: “A.D. 2000”
- *do not use* “firstly” or “secondly”; use “first” and “second”
- use numerals for both percent (one word) and percentages:  
2 percent  
3.75 percent  
0.6 percent  
10 percentage points
- use numerals to express age:  
5 years old  
32-year-old
- fractions should be written out and hyphenated:  
two-thirds  
three-fourths

**offering**

lowercase

**offertory (adj.)**

*prefer* “offering”; “offering prayer”

**old Adam**

*note* capitalization treatment

**old covenant/Old Covenant**

*avoid* using the capitalized form, which is a synonym for Old Testament; *prefer* “Old Testament”

**Old Testament**

capitalize; in liturgical reference, use “first reading”

**older adult**

*preferred* term

**one another**

*see* each other, one another

**One in Three**

the Trinity

**online**

one word; do not hyphenate

**ordination**

lowercase; but capitalize when used in the title of the rite: “Rite of Ordination”

**Oriental**

*do not use*

*see* Asian

**original sin**

lowercase

**orthodox(y)/Orthodox**

capitalize only when referring to the Eastern Christian groups: “Russian Orthodox,” “Greek Orthodox,” “Orthodox churches”; or “Orthodox Jews”; but “Lutheran orthodoxy”

**outreach to**

*avoid*; use “outreach among” instead

**Pacific Islanders**

use to refer to people from Pacific Island countries; whenever possible, make references to a specific ethnic heritage: “Tongan,” “Fijian,” “Tahitian,” “Marshallese,” “Trukese”

**page**

abbreviated “p.” for one page: “p. 439”; “pp.” for a run of pages: “pp. 67–71”

**Palm Sunday**

in liturgical usage *prefer* “Sunday of the Passion”

**parable**

lowercase even when used to refer to a particular parable: “parable of the good Samaritan,” “parable of the sower”

**Paraclete**

translates from Greek as “advocate,” “intercessor”; refers to the Holy Spirit

**parousia**

Greek word referring to the second coming of Christ (*exception to Merriam-Webster’s*, which capitalizes it); do not italicize or place in quotation marks

**paschal**

lowercase as an adjective: “paschal candle,” “paschal mystery,” “paschal lamb,” “paschal full moon”; typically needs definition or explanatory phrase when used

**paschal lamb/Paschal Lamb**

capitalize when used as a substitute name for Jesus:

The Paschal Lamb was sacrificed for our sins.

but

Jesus is the paschal lamb.

**Paschal Triduum**

*prefer* “the Three Days”

**Passion, the**

capitalize when referring to a day: “Sunday of the Passion”; a portion of Scripture: “the Passion narrative”; or the suffering of Jesus: “the Passion of Christ”

**Passion Week**

capitalize

**Passover Feast**

capitalize

**pastor**

*see* clergy titles

**Pastoral Epistles**

*prefer* Pastoral Letters

**Pauline Epistles**

*prefer* Pauline Letters

**Pentateuch**

capitalize

**pentateuchal**

lowercase

**Pentecost**

capitalize

**pentecostal/Pentecostals**

capitalize only when referring to a specific religious group

**people living in poverty**

use instead of “the poor”

**percent**

one word; spell out the word in running text rather than using the percent sign (%): use numerals, not words, for the quantity expressed: “4 percent,” “0.6 percent”

*see also* AP Stylebook, “percent”

*exception:* may use percent sign if quoting interest rates, statistics or in fundraising materials

**person/people**

plural form of person is “people” *not* “persons”:

People who wish to receive consideration should speak to the registrar.

*exception:* use “persons” only for the voting category: “persons of color or language other than English”; or in reference to the triune God: “God in three persons”

**petition/Petition**

capitalize when referring to individual petitions of the Lord’s Prayer: “the Third Petition”; but “this petition”

**Ph.D./M.Div./D.Min.**

use periods and no spaces between characters

**Pharisees**

capitalize

**pietism/Pietism**

capitalize only when referring to a movement in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries

**pietists/Pietists**

*see* pietism

**p.m., a.m.**

lowercase, with periods

**poor, the**

*do not use;* use “people living in poverty”

**position titles**

*see* titles of ELCA churchwide staff

**possessives**

*see* AP Stylebook, “Possessives”

**postal codes**

*see* state names

**prayer at the close of the day**

*see* night prayer

**precious blood**

lowercase

**prefixes**

- in general, do not hyphenate when the word after the prefix starts with a consonant (*exception:* “Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations”);
- however, hyphenation should be used:
  - when the prefix ends in a vowel and the word that follows begins with the same vowel;
  - *exception:* words like “cooperate,” “coordinate,” “coexist,” “coequal”;
  - if the word that follows the prefix is capitalized: “sub-Saharan”;

- if the prefix is doubled: “sub-subparagraph”

see AP Stylebook, specific listings for commonly used prefixes

### **Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**

a full communion partner with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; *note* the periods in the initials when the full name of the church body is used

### **presiding bishop**

the title of the president and chief executive officer of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; when the title comes before the name, capitalize title:

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America held a news conference.

lowercase when the office is identified after the name:

According to the Rev. Mark S. Hanson, presiding bishop of the ELCA, ...

### **presiding minister**

lowercase

### **priesthood of all believers**

lowercase

### **Prince of Peace**

capitalize; refers to Christ

### **principal, principle**

as a noun, “principal” means “head of a school”; or “leading performer”:

The understudy replaced the principal due to illness

or “capital sum”:

Please add the interest to the principal.

as an adjective, it means “main” or “chief”:

The principal idea as stated by our principal pastor was excellent.

“principle” is *always* a noun and *never* an adjective; it denotes “concept,” “primary source” or “correct conduct”:

Gravity is a principle of physics.

A man of principle never cheats.

### **prodigal son**

lowercase

### **program unit**

use only internally; lowercase when used with the name of a unit of the ELCA churchwide office:

The ELCA Global Mission program unit is responsible for calling missionaries to work with companion churches.

see also titles of ELCA churchwide offices, units and sections

### **promised land**

capitalize only when the meaning is otherwise unclear

### **Promised One, the**

capitalize; refers to Jesus

### **proof-text (adj.)**

hyphenate

### **proof texting (v.)**

*note* this is one word

### **proof texts (n.)**

*note* this is two words

### **propers, the**

lowercase

### **prophecy (n.)**

the inspired words of a prophet; a prediction of a future event

### **prophecy, prophesied (v.)**

to say something by, or as if by, divine inspiration; to predict

### **Prophet, Priest and King**

capitalize when used together in a series referring to Christ

### **prophetess**

*avoid*; use “prophet

### **prophets/Prophets**

capitalize when referring to the section of the Bible:

The Prophets are the 17 books of the Bible beginning with Isaiah and ending with Malachi.

lowercase when referring to a person:

Isaiah was one of the prophets.

see also major prophets; minor prophets



## **Protestantism**

capitalize

## **providence/Providence**

lowercase when referring to divine guidance;  
capitalize when referring to God

## **psalmist**

lowercase

## **psalm/Psalm**

capitalize only when referring to the book in the Bible: “the book of Psalms”; or a specific passage: “Psalm 8:3-6”;  
lowercase when used as a general term: “this psalm,” “some psalms”:

My favorite psalm is Psalm 23.

## **psalter/Psalter**

capitalize only when used as a synonym for the book of Psalms

## **quotation marks and punctuation**

periods and commas *always* go inside the quotation marks; colons and semicolons *always* go outside quotation marks unless the punctuation applies to quoted material; question marks or exclamation marks go inside the quotation mark only if the quoted material is the question or exclamation

*exception*: place period after the citation for quotations of Scripture or ELCA constitutional provisions, bylaws or resolutions

For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son (John 3:16).

## **Quran**

*preferred* spelling for the Muslim holy book rather than “Koran” or “Qur’an”; use another form only if preferred by a specific organization or when quoting a specific title or name

## **racial groups**

*see* ethnic, national and racial group references

## **reading**

the Scripture texts appointed for public reading in the liturgy; *preferred* over “lesson”

## **real presence**

lowercase

## **redemption**

lowercase

## **Reformation, the**

also “Counter-Reformation”

## **Reformed church**

refers to Calvinist traditions; capitalize “church” only when referring to a specific church: “Wheaton Christian Reformed Church”; or to the corporate title of a church body: “Reformed Church in America”

## **Reformed Church in America**

a full communion partner with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

## **reformer**

lowercase even when it refers to a leader in the Protestant Reformation

## **region**

capitalize when used as the name of a portion of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: “Region 7”; for subsequent usage lowercase: “the region”; use Arabic numbers for regional identification (*not* Roman numerals)

## **restrictive and nonrestrictive clauses**

*see* that, which

## **resurrection**

capitalize only when the meaning is otherwise unclear

## **Rev., the**

*always* use the abbreviated form, *not* “Reverend”  
*see* clergy titles

## **Revised Common Lectionary**

do not italicize or place in quotation marks unless referring to a specific publication

## **righteous**

lowercase

## **righteous God**

*note* capitalization treatment

## **Righteous One**

capitalize when it refers to Christ

**risen Lord**

*note* capitalization treatment

**Risen One**

capitalize when it refers to Christ

**Rite of Holy Baptism**

*see* baptism

**Roman Catholic Church, the**

capitalize “church” only when referring to a specific church or to the corporate title of a church body: “St. Mary’s Roman Catholic Church,” “the Roman Catholic Church”; but “a Roman Catholic church,” “the Catholic church”

**rosary**

lowercase

**rostered leaders**

the ordained clergy and commissioned lay leaders of the ELCA

*see also* rosters

**rosters**

the ELCA has both clergy and lay rosters; individuals on lay rosters are one of three types:  
    associates in ministry  
    deaconesses  
    diaconal ministers

*note* these titles are lowercase when in running text

*see also* clergy titles

**Russian Orthodox Church, the**

capitalize “church” only when referring to a specific church or to the corporate title of a church body: “Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Church,” “the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia”; but “a Russian Orthodox church”

**Russian Orthodoxy**

capitalize

**sabbath/Sabbath**

usually lowercase; capitalize when referring to Saturday or Sunday as a day of the week; lowercase when referring to a time of rest

**sacrament/Sacrament**

capitalize when used in a title: “the Sacrament of Holy Communion”; otherwise lowercase:

The Lutheran church has two sacraments: baptism and communion.  
Communion is a sacrament.  
The gift of word and sacrament is from God.

**sacramental (adj.)**

lowercase

**Sacrament of Holy Baptism, the**

capitalize when used as a title

**Sacrament of Holy Communion, the**

capitalize when used as a title

**saint**

abbreviate as “St.” for names of saints, cities and other places: “St. John,” “St. Paul, Minn.” “St. Lawrence Seaway”

*exception:* “Saint Paul Area Synod”

**same-gender (adj.)**

*do not use* “same-sex”:

This law protects same-gender couples.

**Sanctus**

capitalize

**Satan**

capitalize

**Satanic**

capitalize

**savior/Savior**

capitalize only when referring to Jesus; may also be spelled “Saviour” in the name of a congregation

**scholastic movement**

lowercase

**scholasticism**

lowercase: “Protestant scholasticism,” “Thomistic scholasticism”

**scholastics, the**

lowercase

**scribes**

lowercase

## **scriptural**

lowercase

## **scripture(s)/Scripture(s)**

capitalize when meaning the Bible or any portion of it:

The pastor quoted various portions of Scripture in his sermon.

lowercase when referring to the sacred writings of a religious group: “the Hindu scriptures”

## **Scripture reference**

*see* “biblical text references” for specific examples of citations

## **seasons of the year**

lowercase “spring,” “summer,” “fall,” “winter” and associated words such as “springtime,” “autumn”

## **seat of judgment**

lowercase;

*note* British spelling has a second “e” (“judgement”)

## **second coming, the**

capitalize only when the meaning is otherwise unclear

## **Second Vatican Council**

also referred to as Vatican II; use “Second Vatican Council” in first usage; “Vatican II” in second and subsequent references

## **seder**

lowercase

## **See**

capitalize when referring to a specific see (religious jurisdiction): “the See of Constantinople,” “the Holy See”

## **semicolon**

*see* AP Stylebook, “Punctuation”

## **senior**

*see* junior, senior

## **senior citizen**

*prefer* “older adult”; use the term “senior citizen” sparingly; usage may be appropriate in generic

phrases that do not refer to specific individuals: “senior citizen’s discount”

## **serial punctuation**

*do not use* a comma before the conjunction in a simple series (e.g., a, b and c):

They bought apples, bananas and cherries.

*however:*

- if a serial comma would help with clarity, insert it:  
We had juice, cereal, and ham and eggs.
- if any of the series terms themselves have a comma in them, use semicolons to separate:  
She was accompanied by her daughter, Jane, from Des Moines; her cousin, Alice, from Chicago; and her aunt Bernice, from Minneapolis.
- *use a comma* before the concluding conjunction in a complex series of phrases:  
The judges in the contest considered the originality of the submission, the creativity of the content, the illustrations, and the compliance with the stated theme.

## **Sermon on the Mount**

*note* capitalization treatment

## **serpent, the**

lowercase

## **Servant Songs, the**

Isaiah 42:1-7; Isaiah 49:1-6; Isaiah 50:4-9; Isaiah 52:13—53:12

## **seven deadly sins**

lowercase

## **sevenfold**

lowercase

## **“simul justus et peccator”**

translates from Latin as “at once justified and sinner”

## **Small Catechism**

do not italicize or put in quotation marks unless referring to a specific publication

## **social messages, ELCA**

*see* messages, ELCA

## social policy resolutions

actions, other than social statements, of the Churchwide Assembly or Church Council on matters of social concern

## social statements, ELCA

use quotation marks for titles of statements; the proper titles of the ELCA social statements and their dates of adoption by the Churchwide Assembly are:

- “Abortion” (1991)
- “The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective” (1991)
- “Death Penalty” (1991)
- “Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice” (1993)
- “Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture” (1993)
- “For Peace in God’s World” (1995)
- “Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All” (1999)
- “Caring for Health: Our Shared Endeavor” (2003)
- “Our Calling in Education” (2007)
- “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust” (2009)

## someone, some one

*see* anyone, any one; everyone, every one; someone, some one

## son/Son

capitalize only when referring to the second person of the Trinity

## Son of God

*note* capitalization treatment

## spirit/Spirit

capitalize when referring to the third person of the Trinity

## Stand With Africa

*note:* the “w” in “With” is capitalized

## stanza

used in reference to hymnody:

Stanza 4 will be sung by the choir.

use the term “verse” only in the context of parts of Scripture

*see also* verse

## state names

- in running copy, spell out state names when used alone in a sentence:

I grew up in Minnesota.

*note:* State names should be abbreviated when a city is also mentioned:

I grew up in Small Town, Minn.

- a comma follows the name of a state in city-state references and follows the name of a country in city-country references in text:  
The meeting was held in Columbus, Ohio, at Trinity Lutheran Seminary.  
The tour included Hamburg, Germany, among other European cities.
- if using an abbreviation, *do not use* postal codes (e.g., MN) in running text; the U.S. Postal Service’s abbreviations for the 50 states are designed to aid sorting of mail by machine; they should *not* be used in copy unless within the context of an address

*see* Appendix 3 for a list of state abbreviations and postal codes

## stationary, stationery

“stationary” means “fixed in place”:

The great stone font is stationary.

“stationery” refers to paper used in correspondence:

We ordered stationery with the new ELCA landmark on it.

## stations of the cross

lowercase

## sub

in general, do not hyphenate after this prefix

*see* prefix, sub-brands

## sub-brands (within the ELCA context)

hyphenate; recognized fundraising programs within the ELCA which include ELCA Disaster Response, ELCA Foundation, ELCA Fund for Leaders, ELCA Good Gifts, ELCA Malaria Campaign, ELCA Missionary Sponsorship, and ELCA World Hunger

## subcommittee

do not hyphenate

## suffering servant/Suffering Servant

capitalize only when used as a title for Christ

## **Sunday school**

*note* capitalization treatment

## **Sunday of the Passion**

Palm Sunday; beginning of Holy Week

## **Sundays of the church year**

in naming the Sundays of the church year, follow the style of “Evangelical Lutheran Worship”, pp. 18-53

## **supreme being/Supreme Being**

capitalize only when referring to God

## **synod (n.)**

one of the three expressions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; in first reference be sure to include “ELCA” in the name; capitalize when used with the name: “ELCA Upstate New York Synod”; second reference: “the synod”; there are no official abbreviations for names of synods, so the name should *always* be spelled out; be sure to reference the correct geographic designations in the names of the synods:

ELCA **Northwest** Minnesota Synod

but

ELCA **Northwestern** Ohio Synod

*see* Appendix 4 for a complete listing of ELCA synods

## **Synod Assembly**

capitalize when referring to a specific assembly, whether or not the year is included:

I attended the 2009 Synod Assembly.  
may lowercase and use only “assembly” upon subsequent reference:

Important decisions are made during the Synod Assembly. During the assembly... .

## **Synod Council**

the governing body of a synod of the ELCA; capitalized similarly to “Church Council”; lowercase “council” when used alone

## **synod office**

## **synodical (adj.)**

the correct form when this term is used strictly as an adjective:

The email was sent out to all synodical bishops.

*note:* synods have a “Synod Council,” *not* a “synodical council”

## **synodwide**

lowercase; do not hyphenate

## **Synoptic Gospels**

capitalize

## **Synoptics, the**

capitalize

## **tagline**

one word; part of the brandmark of the ELCA; the official, registered tagline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is:

God's work. Our hands.

it should *never* appear as a headline or stand alone; it should *always* be capitalized and punctuated as illustrated above, whether in conjunction with the brandmark or in copy, in order to preserve its integrity and assist in brand identification; brandmark resources can be found at [www.ELCA.org/godsworkeourhands](http://www.ELCA.org/godsworkeourhands); consult [www.ELCA.org/trademark](http://www.ELCA.org/trademark) for approved usage of the brandmark

*see also* brandmark

## **teenager**

*do not use*

*see* boy; girl; young adult; youth

## **telephone numbers**

use hyphens in the number, *not* parentheses, periods or a slash; *note* the style to be used when including an extension:

Call us at 773-380-0000, ext. 234, to receive a copy.

dialing “1-” to obtain long distance service is common knowledge and is no longer required when citing a phone number:

800-638-3522

*not* 1-800-638-3522

## **temple/Temple**

capitalize only when naming a specific temple: “the Temple of Solomon,” “the Second Temple”

## **temptation, the**

lowercase

## **Ten Commandments**

capitalize; *do not use* “10 Commandments”

## **tenebrae/Tenebrae**

capitalize only when part of a formal title

## text of a hymn, hymn text

use instead of “lyrics”

## thankoffering

one word; lowercase

## that, which

- “that” is a defining word, telling what is under consideration (restrictive):

Pencils that are sharp write better.

*note:* there are no commas around a “that” clause

- “which” adds a fact or information about the matter receiving attention (nonrestrictive):

Pencils, which need to be sharpened often, are better for homework.

*note:* a “which” clause normally is set off by commas

- if the phrase for which you want to choose “that” or “which” can be left out of the sentence without changing the meaning, use “which”; if leaving the phrase out changes the meaning of the sentence, use “that”

*see also* AP Stylebook, “essential phrases/nonessential phrases”

## Third World nation

*do not use;* instead use the specific name of the hemisphere or area being referred to

*note:* in contemporary usage, “Third World” carries “economic” implications, meaning nonindustrialized or economically poor by Western economic standards; *never* use “developing” as a modifier for a church or a group of people; terms such as “underdeveloped” or “developed” oversimplify a nation’s status based on economic or material terms; in this usage, nations are measured by purely Western standards, and other dimensions of human community and values are overlooked

## Three Days, the

begins with the Maundy Thursday evening liturgy and ends with Easter Day evening prayer; Easter Day is the last day of the Paschal Triduum and the first day of the Easter season

## Three in One

Trinity; refers to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit

## time

- use numbers except for noon and midnight
- lowercase “a.m.” and “p.m.”:

We meet at 2 p.m.

- *avoid* redundancies: write

We will meet at 7 p.m. today.

*not* “We will meet tonight at 7:00 p.m.”

## time of the church, the

the nonfestival part of the church year, including the time after Pentecost and often the time after Epiphany; also referred to as Ordinary Time

## timeline

*one* word when the meaning is schedule of events or equivalent of timetable:

The timeline for development of the health-care social statement listed the dates of meetings at which drafts would be presented.

## time line

*two* words when the meaning is time chart as in a table listing important events for successive years or groups of years within a particular period:

The time line of major religious events in past millennia highlighted the importance of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation in the 16th century.

## time zones

*see* AP Stylebook, “time zones”

## titles of compositions

*includes* book titles, computer titles, movie titles, opera titles, play titles, poem titles, album and song titles, radio and television program titles, titles of lectures, speeches and works of art, messages of the ELCA and preliminary documents *en route to a final ELCA social statement as well as final social statements*

use roman type, set off by quotation marks; capitalize principal words, including prepositions and conjunctions of four or more letters; capitalize articles or words of fewer than four letters if it is the first or last word in a title

*exceptions per* AP Style *include* the Bible and books that are primarily catalogs of reference material (e.g., almanacs, directories, dictionaries, encyclopedias, gazetteers, handbooks and similar publications)

## titles of ELCA churchwide staff

in running text, if the title comes before the name, capitalize title: “Executive Director for ... Jane Doe”; when the office is identified after the name,

lowercase: “Jane Doe, executive director for ...”;  
for signature blocks, put the capitalized title of the  
person on a second line with the unit or program  
name as appropriate

Jane Doe  
Executive Director, {Unit}  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

### **titles of ELCA churchwide ministries and teams**

generally these terms are to be used only in  
internal references; whenever possible in public  
documents, refer to the work of the ELCA rather  
than a specific unit; when used, be sure to include  
“ELCA”:

The staff of the ELCA Mission  
Advancement unit are on retreat today.  
proper titles and designations of offices, units and  
teams are as follows:

Congregational and Synodical Mission  
Advocacy  
Congregational Centers for Mission  
Ethnic-Specific and Multicultural  
Ministries  
Leadership for Mission  
Poverty and Justice Ministries  
Synodical Directors for Evangelical  
Mission  
Worship  
Global Mission  
Diakonia  
Finance and Administration  
Global Community  
Mission Formation/Relationships  
Mission Advancement  
Constituent Support  
ELCA Foundation  
Marketing Communications  
Mission Funding  
ELCA Disaster Response  
ELCA Fund for Leaders  
ELCA Malaria Campaign  
ELCA Missionary Sponsorship and  
Global Appeals  
ELCA Vision for Mission  
ELCA World Hunger  
The Lutheran magazine  
Office of the Presiding Bishop  
Administration  
Human Resources  
Research and Evaluation  
Conference of Bishops  
Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Affairs

Governance  
Theological Discernment  
Office of the Secretary  
Administration  
General Counsel  
Meeting Management/Travel  
Office of the Treasurer  
Budget and Unit Accounting  
Cash, Investment and Building  
Management  
Controller  
Customer Service  
Information Technology  
Internal Audit

### **Separately incorporated ministries:**

ELCA Board of Pensions  
Lutheran Men in Mission  
Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA  
Publishing House of the ELCA (Augsburg  
Fortress Publishers)  
Women of the ELCA

### **Torah**

the five books of Moses, which constitute the  
Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers  
and Deuteronomy

### **Tower of Babel**

capitalize

### **toward**

*do not use* “towards”

### **trademark**

*avoid* using trademark names as a general reference  
to a particular type of product

I used a sticky note to leave him a  
message.

*not* “I used a Post-It note to leave him a message.”

### **transfiguration**

capitalize only when the meaning is otherwise  
unclear or when referring to the festival on the last  
Sunday before Lent: “the Transfiguration of Our  
Lord” or “Transfiguration”

### **transgender**

*see* LGBT

### **traveled, traveling**

*preferred* spelling is with one “l”

**tribe/Tribe**

usually lowercase: “the tribe of Judah,” “tribes of Israel”; but capitalize when used with an American Indian name: “Dakota Tribe”

**tribes, tribal**

*avoid* in general usage; many Africans are very sensitive about being identified along tribal lines; the word “tribe” also carries connotations of primitiveness; *avoid* “tribal” as well unless used by the people themselves; identify a person by nationality or, in some circumstances, by ethnic group or language instead

*note*: for American Indians, “tribe” is acceptable, but “nation” is *preferred*

**triduum, the**

translates from Latin as “three days”; lowercase; but capitalize in “Paschal Triduum”

*see* Three Days, the

**trinitarian/Trinitarian**

capitalize only when referring to the Trinitarian Controversy

**Trinity**

capitalize

**Trinity season**

*prefer* “time after Pentecost”

**triune God**

*note* capitalization treatment

**tune names**

in hymnody, to indicate a tune name, use small caps and appropriate capitalization, no quotation marks:

ADESTE FIDELES  
EIN FESTE BURG

**Twelve, the**

refers to the twelve disciples; capitalize

**twelve days of Christmas, the**

*note* capitalization treatment

**Twelve Step program**

*note* capitalization treatment

**Twelve Steps**

the twelve stages of recovery that are used by Alcoholics Anonymous and similar support groups; capitalize

**unchurched**

use as an adjective only:

Unchurched people make up 40 percent of the U.S. population.

*not* “The unchurched make up . . . .”

do not equate unchurched people with non-Christians; the term “unchurched” describes people who are not active in or members of a congregation; they may or may not be baptized

**undesigned**

*preferred* over “unrestricted” in fundraising materials

**under way**

two words; *preferred* usage would be to say that something “began” or it “started”

**unique**

already means “one of a kind”; writing “very unique” or “quite unique” is redundant

**United Church of Christ**

a full communion partner with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

**United Methodist Church**

a full communion partner with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

**United States**

if abbreviated, use periods within text “U.S.”

**unrestricted**

*see* “undesigned”

**up and down (travel)**

*avoid* “up and down” language that might unintentionally introduce a hierarchy:

I flew to Brazil.

*not* “I flew down to Brazil.”

**Upper Room, the**

*note* capitalization treatment



## URL

acronym for uniform resource locator, an Internet address

- in running text, use roman type:  
Go to [www.ELCA.org/globalmission](http://www.ELCA.org/globalmission) for more information.
- when the URL stands alone, use roman type, no underscore:  
[www.ELCA.org/globalmission](http://www.ELCA.org/globalmission)
- do not include “http://” if the URL begins with “www”
- *avoid*, if possible, listing a URL at the end of the sentence; but if there is no way to rewrite, add ending punctuation; do not add a space between the URL and the ending punctuation
- when the URL breaks at the end of a line of copy, do not add any punctuation, such as a hyphen, lest that hyphen be taken as part of the URL; try to break the URL in a logical place: between words, after existing punctuation, and the like:

The website [www.ELCA.org/what-we-believe/social-issues/faith-science-and-technology.aspx](http://www.ELCA.org/what-we-believe/social-issues/faith-science-and-technology.aspx) contains more information.

## U.S.

abbreviation for United States; *preferred* use is as an adjective: “U.S. Senate”; use periods with no space between letters

## USA

abbreviation for United States of America; no periods, no spaces

## vacation Bible school

only the word Bible is capitalized

## Vatican II

use “Second Vatican Council” on first reference, “Vatican II” for second and subsequent references

## verse

refers to a portion of Scripture; “v.” and “vv.” are the abbreviations for “verse” and “verses”; the abbreviation is followed by a space and the verse number(s): “v. 2,” “vv. 4–8”; use “stanza” when referring to hymnody  
*see also* stanza

## vespers

*see* evening prayer

## Veterans’ Day

capitalize and use apostrophe appropriately

## victim

*generally do not use; see* disease

## vigil/Vigil

capitalize when meaning is Easter Vigil or Pentecost Vigil; lowercase all other uses

## Vigil of Easter

*see* Easter Vigil

## virgin birth

lowercase

## Virgin Mary

capitalize

## Virgin, the

capitalize

## visitation/Visitation

capitalize only when referring to the commemoration on May 31; but *preferred* name for that commemoration is

Visit of Mary to Elizabeth

## voting member

use in the context of a Churchwide Assembly or Synod Assembly; *do not use* “delegate” in this context; attendees of these assemblies are not “delegates” from their synod and as such, may make their own decisions, based upon careful examination of the issue at hand; however, in referring to the Women of the ELCA Triennial Gathering, “delegate” is the proper term as they are sent on behalf of the sending entity.

## -ward, -wards

*prefer* the variant without the -s, whether the word is used as an adjective: “homeward journey”; as an adverb: “homeward bound,” “doing things backward”; or as a preposition: “toward the sea”

## Web/web

short for World Wide Web (hence “www” in many URLs); capitalize when it stands alone:

I found the information on the Web at this URL.

but as suggested in AP Stylebook, use lowercase when it is joined to another noun: “webcam,” “webcast,” “webmaster”

### **Web addresses**

*prefer* “URL”

### **website**

one word, no hyphen; lowercase

### **well-being (n.)**

hyphenate:

Doctors watch over the well-being of their patients.

### **well-known (adj.)**

hyphenate

### **which, that**

*see* that, which

### **White (adj.)**

*exception* to AP Stylebook: capitalize when referring to a group:

White Americans

similar style is used with other group designations:

Black Americans

*avoid* using as a noun

### **who, whom**

*see* AP Stylebook, “who, whom”

### **who’s, whose**

“who’s” is the contraction for “who is” or “who has”:

Who’s coming for lunch?

Who’s done their homework?

“whose” is a possessive:

Whose child is coming for lunch?

### **Wise Men, the**

*preferred* term is “the magi”

### **woman**

use for any adult female

*see also* adult; girl; young adult; youth

### **Women of the ELCA**

the proper name for the women’s organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; *do not use* “WELCA” or “W/ELCA”

*see* Appendix 5 for Women of the ELCA style sheet

### **word/Word**

capitalize only as a synonym for Christ:

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

but “God’s word to Moses,” “word of God,” “the word of the Lord”

### **word and sacrament(s)**

lowercase:

The gift of word and sacrament is from God.

### **Word Incarnate**

capitalize when referring to Jesus; but “the incarnate Word”

### **works-righteousness**

hyphenate

### **World Hunger**

*do not use*; *use* “ELCA World Hunger” instead

### **World Wide Web**

a subset of the Internet, but not a synonym for it

### **worldwide**

one word without hyphen, except in reference to the World Wide Web

### **worshiped, worshipping**

*preferred* spelling is with one “p”: “the worshipping congregation”; example of proper usage:

Last Sunday 324 people worshiped with us.

*not*

Last Sunday we worshiped 324 people.

### **writings/Writings**

capitalize only as a division of Jewish scriptures: “Law, Prophets, Writings”

### **Yahweh**

*preferred* usage, also “YHWH”; *preferred* over “Jehovah”

*avoid* “Jahweh”

### **year**

*see* centuries; dates; decades

**young adult**

a person between the ages of 18 and 30

*see also* adult; boy; girl; man; woman; youth

**your, you're**

“your” is the possessive:

Your desk is so neat.

“you’re” is the contraction of “you are”:

You’re going to clean your desk.

**youth**

refers to individual/s ages 12–18; for those under age 12 use “boy” for males and “girl” for females; “young man” or “young woman” are also possible terms; at age 18 everyone is a “man,” “woman,” or “young adult”

*see also* adult; boy; girl; man; woman; young adult

**zealot/Zealot**

capitalize when referring to the fanatical first-century group of individuals who wanted to overthrow the Romans; otherwise, lowercase

## Appendix 1

### Credit Lines/Copyright Information for Key Resources

#### Versions of the Bible:

The following Bible translation copyright acknowledgment lines may be used without further permission if stated conditions in italics are met. Permission must be requested if conditions are exceeded. (NOTE: “<” means that the total word count quoted from that source is less than the indicated amount of words; “≤” means the total word count is equal to or less than the amount indicated.) **The NRSV is the preferred version of the Bible for use in the ELCA.** If it is necessary, in a particular context, to quote from another version of the Bible, reasoning for this deviation from the standard should be provided when the document is submitted to Marketing Communications for editorial review as well as an indication of which version is being used.

NOTE: Acronyms as listed below are allowed for use in biblical credits and citations; **this is an exception to the style which restricts the use of acronyms in general.**

#### **Amplified Bible: Old Testament**

*< 50 verses; no major portion of our publication or of Bible book*

Scripture is taken from the Amplified Bible: Old Testament, copyright © 1962, 1964 by Zondervan Publishing House. Used by permission.

#### **Amplified New Testament**

*< 50 verses; no major portion of our publication or of Bible book*

Scripture quotations are from the Amplified New Testament, copyright © 1954, 1958 The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

#### **Contemporary English Version**

*< 500 verses; < 50% of a Bible book & < 25% of our text content*

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### **New Testament in Modern English (Phillips)**

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**Today's English Version (TEV)**

*see* “Good News for Modern Man” listing

## Other Commonly Quoted References:

### **Eerdman's Bible Dictionary**

< 400 words

The Eerdman's Bible Dictionary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987)

### **Revised Common Lectionary**

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## Worship Resources:

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## Appendix 2

### ELCA Disaster Response and ELCA World Hunger Style Sheet

#### ELCA Disaster Response

- ELCA Disaster Response refers to both ELCA International Disaster Response and ELCA Domestic Disaster Response
- the “ELCA Disaster Response” brandmark is used for both ELCA International Disaster Response and ELCA Domestic Disaster Response
- *note:* for designated disasters, 100 percent of donations designated for a specific disaster are used for that disaster's immediate relief and long-term recovery efforts; should a response become fully funded, additional designated gifts will be applied to similar international or domestic response efforts; for a listing of disasters accepting designated donations, visit [www.elca.org/giving](http://www.elca.org/giving)
- key messages include: “In it for the long haul,” “prepared to care,” “bringing help and hope” and “immediate relief and long-term recovery”

#### ELCA Domestic Disaster Response and Lutheran Disaster Response

- **ELCA Domestic Disaster Response** is the ELCA’s program and fund responding to major natural and human-caused disasters in the United States and the Caribbean
- when communicating with an ELCA-specific audience or soliciting funds from ELCA members, refer to ELCA Domestic Disaster Response. Remember, “domestic” means more than “United States,” as it includes the Caribbean.
- **Lutheran Disaster Response** is a collaborative ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

#### ELCA World Hunger

- when referring to ELCA World Hunger, use the official name, “ELCA World Hunger,” never “World Hunger”
- “ELCA World Hunger” is the umbrella term for interunit churchwide, synodical, and congregational programs, events and activities—both program and appeal
- the “ELCA World Hunger” brandmark is used for both ELCA World Hunger program and appeal
- when ELCA World Hunger is referenced in a publication where the acronym “ELCA” needs to be defined, do not say, “Evangelical Lutheran Church in America World Hunger.” Instead, use construction similar to:  
ELCA World Hunger is the hunger-fighting ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- use “ELCA World Hunger Appeal” and “ELCA World Hunger and Disaster Appeal” for rare, internal communication when referring to the fundraising arm of ELCA World Hunger and ELCA Disaster Response; this usage is also appropriate when referring to a staff position or title
- similarly, use “ELCA World Hunger program” for rare, internal communication when referring to the programmatic arm of ELCA World Hunger; this usage is also appropriate when referring to a staff position or title
- key message: ELCA World Hunger addresses the root causes of hunger and poverty through a program of relief, development, education, advocacy and lifestyle stewardship  
*never* use “the” before “ELCA World Hunger”



### Sample relationship language

ELCA World Hunger	works internationally through	Lutheran World Relief, The Lutheran World Federation and companion churches to support/enable...
	works domestically through	hunger grant recipients to support/enable...
	OR supports/enables [name of partner or project]	
ELCA Disaster Response	supports <b>partners in</b> OR supports <b>members of</b> Action by Churches Together	
	supports Lutheran Disaster Response	and <b>local affiliate</b> [name of Social Ministry Organization]

## Appendix 3

### State Abbreviations and Postal Codes

<u>State/Territory Name</u>	<u>Abbreviation</u>	<u>Postal Code</u>
Alabama	Ala.	AL
Alaska	Alaska	AK
Arizona	Ariz.	AZ
Arkansas	Ark.	AR
California	Calif.	CA
Colorado	Colo.	CO
Connecticut	Conn.	CT
Delaware	Del.	DE
District of Columbia	D.C.	DC
Florida	Fla.	FL
Guam	Guam	GU
Georgia	Ga.	GA
Hawaii	Hawaii	HI
Idaho	Idaho	ID
Iowa	Iowa	IA
Illinois	Ill.	IL
Indiana	Ind.	IN
Kansas	Kan.	KS
Kentucky	Ky.	KY
Louisiana	La.	LA
Maine	Maine	ME
Maryland	Md.	MD
Massachusetts	Mass.	MA
Michigan	Mich.	MI
Minnesota	Minn.	MN
Mississippi	Miss.	MS
Missouri	Mo.	MO
Montana	Mont.	MT

<u>State/Territory Name</u>	<u>Abbreviation</u>	<u>Postal Code</u>
Nebraska	Neb.	NE
Nevada	Nev.	NV
New Hampshire	N.H.	NH
New Jersey	N.J.	NJ
New Mexico	N.M.	NM
New York	N.Y.	NY
North Carolina	N.C.	NC
North Dakota	N.D.	ND
Ohio	Ohio	OH
Oklahoma	Okla.	OK
Oregon	Ore.	OR
Pennsylvania	Pa.	PA
Puerto Rico	Puerto Rico	PR
Rhode Island	R.I.	RI
South Carolina	S.C.	SC
South Dakota	S.D.	SD
Tennessee	Tenn.	TN
Texas	Texas	TX
Utah	Utah	UT
Vermont	Vt.	VT
Virgin Islands (US)	Virgin Islands	VI
Virginia	Va.	VA
Washington	Wash.	WA
Wisconsin	Wis.	WI
West Virginia	W.Va.	WV
Wyoming	Wyo.	WY

## Appendix 4

### ELCA Synod Names

Alaska Synod
Allegheny Synod
Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod
Caribbean Synod
Central States Synod
Central/Southern Illinois Synod
Delaware-Maryland Synod
East-Central Synod of Wisconsin
Eastern North Dakota Synod
Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod
Florida-Bahamas Synod
Grand Canyon Synod
Greater Milwaukee Synod
Indiana-Kentucky Synod
La Crosse Area Synod
Lower Susquehanna Synod
Metropolitan Chicago Synod
Metropolitan New York Synod
Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod
Minneapolis Area Synod
Montana Synod
Nebraska Synod
New England Synod
New Jersey Synod
North Carolina Synod
North/West Lower Michigan Synod
Northeastern Iowa Synod
Northeastern Minnesota Synod
Northeastern Ohio Synod
Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod
Northern Great Lakes Synod
Northern Illinois Synod

Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana
Northwest Synod of Wisconsin
Northwest Washington Synod
Northwestern Minnesota Synod
Northwestern Ohio Synod
Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod
Oregon Synod
Pacifica Synod
Rocky Mountain Synod
Saint Paul Area Synod
Sierra Pacific Synod
Slovak Zion Synod
South Carolina Synod
South Dakota Synod
South-Central Synod of Wisconsin
Southeast Michigan Synod
Southeastern Iowa Synod
Southeastern Minnesota Synod
Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod
Southeastern Synod
Southern Ohio Synod
Southwest California Synod
Southwestern Minnesota Synod
Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod
Southwestern Texas Synod
Southwestern Washington Synod
Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod
Upper Susquehanna Synod
Upstate New York Synod
Virginia Synod
West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod
Western Iowa Synod
Western North Dakota Synod

NOTE: there are no acronyms for synod names; the synod name should always be spelled out as presented here

## Appendix 5

### Women of the ELCA Style Sheet

Many common words with specific meanings are used within Women of the ELCA. Here are some definitions and style standards.

#### **Café: *Stirring the Spirit Within***

the monthly online magazine for young women

#### **churchwide executive board**

this group of 17 board members and four officers (elected by the triennial convention for a three-year term) serves as the board of directors and as the interim legislative authority between triennial conventions

#### **circle**

a group within a congregational unit — usually for the purpose of such program activities as Bible study, fellowship and personal growth — which meets regularly and supports the purpose of the organization

#### **cluster**

a grouping of congregational, intercongregational and special units within the territory of a synodical women's organization; also known as a "conference" in some areas  
*note: do not use "district"*

#### **conference**

a grouping of congregational, intercongregational and special units within the territory of a synodical women's organization; also known as a "cluster" in some areas  
*note: do not use "district"*

#### **congregational unit**

a member of Women of the ELCA; a community of women coming together for study, support and action in local and other settings of Women of the ELCA; also referred to as a unit  
*note: the member of Women of the ELCA is the unit, not the individual participants*

#### **delegate**

the organization sends delegates to the triennial convention, not voting members

#### **Gather magazine**

as of September 2011 this is the name of the monthly magazine sent to all subscribers

#### **Lutheran Woman Today magazine**

please use "magazine" when describing this publication; former monthly publication of the Women of the ELCA, replaced by *Gather*  
*note* the proper name is "Woman," not "Women"

#### **memorial**

a statement of facts presented to a legislative body that is the basis for a petition or request for action; the way in which one organization formally makes a request of another, brought to a synodical women's organization convention by a unit or to a triennial convention by a synodical women's organization

#### **participant**

woman who takes part in carrying out the mission of and supports the ministries of Women of the ELCA; not all women in an ELCA congregation are automatically participants in Women of the ELCA; only those who take part in carrying out the mission of the organization and support the ministries of Women of the ELCA are participants

#### **serial commas**

*note* that the magazine of the Women of the ELCA uses the serial comma

#### **special unit**

a member of Women of the ELCA; women who come together in special settings as authorized by the executive board, who are not affiliated with a congregation (such as on a college campus or in a retirement center)

#### **synodical women's organization (SWO)**

legislative and programmatic expression of Women of the ELCA that assists congregational, intercongregational and special units within its territory to fulfill the purpose of Women of the ELCA; there is a SWO in each synod of the ELCA

**triennial convention**

the convention of Women of the ELCA; the highest legislative authority of the organization; meets every three years  
*note:* this is different from a “triennial gathering”

**website**

the official website of the Women of the ELCA is [www.womenoftheelca.org](http://www.womenoftheelca.org)

**Women of the ELCA**

this is the shortened form for “Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,” the legal name of the women’s organization of the ELCA; *always* spell out Women of the ELCA; *never* use WELCA or Welca; Women of the ELCA is *never* preceded by “the”