



Policy for Protection of Children, Youth and Other Vulnerable People in Glory Lutheran Church

POLICY

Glory Lutheran Church is committed to protect children, youth and vulnerable adults, and those who minister to and with them.

RATIONALE

Glory Lutheran Church has a mandate to minister to individuals, families, adults, youth and children. In that context, Glory Lutheran Church stresses the sanctity of human life and the importance and worth of each individual as a child of God. It is our responsibility as a church to safeguard that trust. Further comments related to the rationale for reducing the risk of sexual abuse of vulnerable persons is outlined in Appendix A.

GUIDELINES

The following guidelines provide the framework for the administration of this policy.

1. PROTECTION PROCEDURES

COMMITMENTS

Glory Lutheran Church makes the following commitments to protect children, youth, and vulnerable adults, and those who minister to and with them:

- 1) Screening of those who work with children, youth and other vulnerable individuals is important.
- 2) All salaried staff will undergo a *police records check*.
- 3) All employees and volunteers who work with preschoolers, children and youth will be made familiar with the nature of child sexual abuse.
- 4) All employees and volunteers who work with preschoolers, children and youth will be made familiar with the guidelines contained in the *Policy to Protect Children, Youth and Other Vulnerable People in Glory Lutheran Church*.
- 5) The policies to prevent sexual abuse are regarded seriously and will be enforced.
- 6) All volunteers will sign a VOLUNTEER MINISTRY COVENANT, agreeing to comply with church policies and guidelines.
- 7) Where more than one young people are present and the room door is open and where other adults are in the building (i.e. parents at confirmation class, choir practice occurring during the class time frame etc.) it is acceptable to have one adult present during activities involving children and youth.

- 8) In general, volunteers will be permitted to work with preschoolers, children or youth only after they have been active participants of an ELCIC congregation, ministry or office for a period of six months. (This provision may be waived where the person is transferring in from another church and/or has a letter of recommendation signed by a minister of that church.)
- 9) References for volunteers applying for any position involving work with preschoolers, children or youth will be checked. The right to require a police records check is reserved. A police records check will always be required in those instances where someone is a new resident or unknown to the church community or where an applicant's credentials cannot be verified.
- 10) A directory of names and addresses of parents and children will be carefully maintained.

Washroom Guidelines

Parents are to be encouraged to take their children to visit the washroom prior to each class or service. This recommendation is to be communicated to parents at the beginning of each new school year, and throughout the year to newcomers.

A. Nursery

As a general rule, volunteers in the nursery will not be expected to change diapers. However in the event that this becomes necessary the following rules will apply:

- Diaper changing must always take place in such a way that another nursery volunteer or responsible adult can see the child being changed.
- Young volunteers must be of confirmation age or older, with appropriate training, before being permitted to change diapers.

B. Preschool

- For a group of preschoolers, two adults will escort the children to the washroom.
- If just one child must go to the washroom, the adult volunteer should escort the child to the washroom and prop the outside door open. The volunteer should then remain outside the washroom door and wait for the child before escorting him or her back to the classroom. The volunteer should call the child's name if they are taking longer than seems necessary.
- The volunteer should never be alone with a child in an unsupervised washroom and never go into a washroom cubicle with a child and shut the door.
- When preschool children need assistance in the washroom, an adult may enter the washroom cubicle to assist only when a second adult is within visual contact. If this is not possible, inform another adult when taking a child to the washroom and when returning.
- A second adult should be within visual contact. If this is not possible, inform another adult when taking a child to the washroom and when returning.
- In light of the fact that most abusers are male, and for the protection of male volunteers, it would be wise for men to avoid assisting boys or girls of any age in the washrooms. It is suggested that only women assist children in the washrooms.

C. Ages 5-7

- A child seven years of age or younger should not be sent to the washroom alone, but should be accompanied by an adult volunteer.
- For children seven years of age and under, the adult volunteer should escort the child to the washroom, and prop the door open to make sure that everything is in order. The volunteer should then remain outside the washroom door and wait for the child before escorting him or her back to the classroom.
- The volunteer should call the child's name if they are taking longer than seems necessary.
- The volunteer should never go into a washroom cubicle with a child/youth and shut the door.

Proper Display of Affection

Touch is an essential responsibility in nurturing lives. Volunteers need to be aware of, and sensitive to, differences in sexual development, cultural differences, family backgrounds, individual personalities, and special needs. Physical contact with children should be age and developmentally appropriate. The following guidelines are recommended as healthy and positive displays of God's love:

A. Appropriate Touch

Love and caring can be expressed in the following appropriate ways:

- Bend down to the child's eye level and speak kindly; listen to him or her carefully;
- Take a child's hand and lead him or her to an activity;
- Put an arm around the shoulder of a child who needs quieting or comforting;
- Take both of the child's hands as you say, "You did such a good job!" (or "I'm so glad to see you. We've missed you!" etc.);
- Pat a child on the head, hand, shoulder or back to affirm him or her;
- Hold a child by the shoulders or hand to keep his or her attention while you redirect the child's behaviour;
- Gently hold a child's chin to help him or her focus on what you are saying;
- Hold and console a preschool child who is crying.

B. Inappropriate Touch

Staff and volunteers should avoid:

- Kissing a child or coaxing a child to kiss you;
- Extended hugging;
- Tickling;
- Touching a child in any area that would normally be covered by a bathing suit (except when assisting a child with toileting as outlined previously);
- Carrying older children or having them sit on your lap;
- Being alone with a child.

Staffing and Supervision Guidelines

Church staff and volunteers should always conduct themselves appropriately, being an example of integrity, respect and honesty to those in their care. The desire is to provide a safe and loving environment where children and youth feel comfortable and are protected.

A. Supervision

Programs that involve children and youth must always include adequate supervision. Supervision should also be maintained before and after the event until all children are in the custody of their parents or legal guardians.

B. Two Adults

In general, there are to be two unrelated adults in any enclosed room with children or youth. Family (couple) ministry teams work well and are encouraged as a method of staffing. However, for the protection of this family, we recommend the presence of at least one other volunteer not related to the family.

C. Parental Permission

Consent of a parent must be obtained before transporting or being alone with a child or youth. Children and youth must also have written parental permission for involvement in confirmation ministry programs, Glory Lutheran Youth, or other church-sponsored field trips or outings. See ACTIVITY PERMISSION FORM.

D. Day Trips

- Activities conducted away from church property should be pre-approved by the congregational pastor or the committee/ministry chair.
- Parents should be notified at least one week prior to the outing.
- A completed ACTIVITY PERMISSION FORM and MEDICAL PERMISSION FORM are required for each child participating in day trips.
- Day trips must be supervised by a minimum of two approved, unrelated adult leaders.
- All supervising adults must be approved volunteers.
- When transporting children is involved in an activity, all drivers must have a valid driver's license and current automobile insurance. The number of persons per car must never exceed the number of seat belts.

E. Overnight Events

- Overnight activities should be pre-approved by Church Council.
- Parental permission should be secured in writing for over-night events.
- A completed ACTIVITY PERMISSION FORM and MEDICAL PERMISSION FORM are required for each child participating in overnight events.
- Overnight trips must be supervised by a minimum of two approved, unrelated adult leaders.
- Overnight activities should have a minimum ratio of one adult leader for every five children or one adult leader for every nine youths. Each leader should have an assigned group of children/youth for whom they will be responsible during the overnight event.
- All supervising adults must be approved volunteers.

What Does This Mean?

A. What Does this Mean for Nursery, Kid's Church and Confirmation Ministry?

- All Kid's Church and Nursery staff must wear name tags so that they can be easily identified.
- Two unrelated adults should be with any group of children. If it is necessary for an adult to be alone with children, there must be a window in the door providing an unobstructed view of the children or the door must be left open.
- Each Sunday, the Kid's Church Coordinator (or designate) should make regular visits to ensure each class is properly staffed and supervised.
- Should there be a nursery staffed by volunteers, a sign-up sheet indicating child's name, parent's name and parent's location should be provided in the nursery.
- Children should not be dropped-off in a pre-school classroom without a teacher or caregiver present.
- Pre-school children should be released only to a parent or adult family member known to the staff-person.
- For nursery and for pre-school classes, follow the washroom guidelines, page 2.
- Observe the guidelines for proper display of affection, page 3.
- For day trips or special events, follow guidelines, page 3/4.
- When in doubt, confer with the congregational pastor or teacher/Education Chair.

B. What Does this Mean for Youth Group Leaders?

- Two unrelated adult leaders should always be present at any youth group activity.
- Obtain parental permission for youth to be transported or involved in youth group activities. See the ACTIVITY PERMISSION FORM.

- Observe the guidelines for proper display of affection, page 3.
- For day trips or special events, follow guidelines, page 3/4.
- When in doubt, confer with a pastor, committee/ministry chair.

C. What Does this Mean for Mentors?

- To the extent possible, meet in such public environments as Tim Horton’s, a park setting, a congregational fellowship room, a community centre, etc.
- Consider meeting in a group with one or more fellow mentors and youth.
- Always obtain parental permission to transport youth or to be alone with them.
- Observe the guidelines for proper display of affection, page 8.
- When in doubt, confer with a pastor, committee/ministry chair.

D. What Does this Mean for Other Volunteers?

- Follow the staffing and supervision guidelines, pages 8.
- Observe the guidelines for proper display of affection, page 8.
- When in doubt, confer with a pastor, committee/ministry chair.

2. RECRUITMENT OF VOLUNTEERS

All prospective volunteers for ministry with children and youth must meet the following requirements:

- active participation in an ELCIC congregation or ministry for at least six months, or a letter of recommendation from a former pastor;
- attendance at an session to review this policy;
- signing of a VOLUNTEER MINISTRY COVENANT;
- completion of a VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM;
- a reference check;
- a *police records check* if required.

Review of the Policy

All prospective volunteers for ministry with children and youth must attend an introductory session to review this policy. These sessions will be offered by the congregation, ministry or office for groups or individuals as required. A copy of the *Policy to Protect Children, Youth and Other Vulnerable People in Glory Lutheran Church* will be provided to all prospective volunteers with the expectation that they read the material and become familiar with the contents.

Volunteer Application

Prospective volunteers for ministry with children and youth must complete a VOLUNTEER MINISTRY COVENANT and VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM. (To protect the church from legal liability and for the protection of all volunteers, every prospective ministry leader – including established or long-time members of Glory Lutheran Church – must complete the VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM.)

The VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM is critical in protecting the church from legal action if a case of abuse occurs in which a church volunteer is involved. To protect vulnerable people and to be protected from liability, the church must take reasonable action in screening and supervising the volunteers involved in any work with children, youth or other vulnerable people. A court can find the church legally liable if it is less than systematic and therefore negligent in screening volunteers. By having prospective volunteers fill out a VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM, the church greatly reduces the potential for abuse and the resultant liability.

The Human Resources Committee Chair or designate will monitor the status of the application process and will ultimately place completed material in a secure *Volunteer Placement File* containing:

- Volunteer Ministry Covenant
- Volunteer Application Form
- Volunteer References Verification Form
- Volunteer Approval Form
- Police records check report (if required)

Reference Check

Three personal references are requested on the VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM.

References that are acceptable are limited to the following:

- Former or present pastor;
- Long-time friend (minimum of 5 years);
- One parent (for minors);
- Teacher (for minors);
- Congregational member (who has sufficient strength of relationship to comment on the individual's personal habits and character);
- Employer or colleague.

At least two of these references will be contacted and asked to affirm the appointment of the volunteer. The person making the contacts, the date, and a summary of the reference's comments will all be recorded on the VOLUNTEER REFERENCES VERIFICATION FORM which will become part of the individual's *Volunteer Placement File*. A suggested VOLUNTEER REFERENCE VERIFICATION SCRIPT can be used for telephone follow-up when screening applications.

Police Records Check

The right to ask for a *police records check* for volunteers is reserved by Glory Lutheran Church. (All salaried staff submit to a *police records check* for their own protection and for the protection of the church.)

A *police records check* will always be required in those instances where someone is a new resident or unknown to the church community or where an applicant's references cannot be fully verified. Minors (under 16 years of age) are exempt from a *police records check*.

The cost for a *police records check* requested by Glory Lutheran Church will be borne by the church.

The *police records check* report is to be brought to the Human Resources Committee Chair or Designate. If there is no criminal record of any sort, the volunteer may be considered for ongoing service in the church. If there is a record or information which raises some concern, the Pastor and Human Resources Chair or Designate will meet to discuss and resolve the matter.

If the offense is other than child or sexual abuse, the volunteer may proceed with ministry in the church provided both the pastor and the Human Resource Chair or designate agree.

The following are criteria to consider when evaluating the information:

- The number and type of convictions;
- The age and circumstances of the offender at the time of the offense;
- The length of time between past criminal activity and the present;
- The conduct and circumstances of the individual since the offense; and
- The likelihood of the individual repeating the offense/being involved in any other criminal activity.

If any offense is related to the abuse of children or is of a sexual nature, the prospective volunteer will not

be approved for ministry with children, youth or vulnerable people in Glory Lutheran Church. The information contained in the *police records check* report is considered strictly confidential. Only the pastor and the Human Resource Chair or their designate can be privy to the information.

A copy of any submitted *police records check* report will be kept in the confidential, secure *Volunteer Placement File*.

Approval

The Human Resource Chair or designate will review the materials and complete the VOLUNTEER APPROVAL FORM. A *prospective volunteer* becomes an *approved volunteer* once the Human Resources Chair or designate signs the VOLUNTEER APPROVAL FORM. All volunteer application materials will be kept in a confidential, secure *Volunteer Placement File* for a minimum of 7 years.

Disqualification

Kinds of criminal convictions which disqualify individuals from working with children and youth:

- A criminal conviction for a sexual offense involving a minor would disqualify an applicant.
- Other crimes would strongly suggest that a person should not be considered for work with minors in Glory Lutheran Church. At the same time, some crimes would not result in automatic disqualification because they would not suggest a risk of abuse or molestation. For example, some property offenses would not be included in this list, particularly if the offense occurred long ago and the individual has a long history of impeccable behaviour.

Will religious conversion make a difference for someone who has been guilty of past abuse?

No. Occasionally, a person may freely admit to a prior incident, but insist that they have since had a conversion experience and that they now present no risk whatever. The safest course is to encourage such an individual to work in the church, but in a position not involving access to children, youth or other vulnerable people. This is a reasonable accommodation of the individual's desire to serve in Glory Lutheran Church.

A church that permits such an individual to work with children, youth or other vulnerable people, on the basis of the professed religious conversion, will have a virtually indefensible position should another incident of abuse occur. The defense – that the abuser claimed to have been converted – would likely be viewed with derision by a civil court. Putting a known abuser in a position involving access to children, youth or other vulnerable people is taking an enormous risk.

3. INCIDENT REPORTING PROCEDURES

Anyone who has concerns regarding the safety of a child must report it to the Pastor or Council Chair who will facilitate the contact with the appropriate child protection agency. The church's legal advisor will also be contacted.

Where a rostered minister is the object of an allegation, the Bishop of the synod in which the minister is rostered will be advised.

Abuse or neglect need not have already occurred for a child to be in need of protection; it is not necessary to wait until a child has been harmed to intervene.

DISCUSS SUSPICIOUS BEHAVIOUR IMMEDIATELY

Any inappropriate conduct or relationships between volunteers and a child, youth or other vulnerable person must be confronted immediately and investigated. Prompt warnings must be issued when appropriate, and the situation monitored very closely. The volunteer's services should be terminated

immediately for continued violation of sufficient gravity. Kid's Church staff, Confirmation Ministry mentors, Youth Group coordinators and other ministry leaders should note when a youth or child appears aloof or withdrawn, or exhibits a marked personality change. This may indicate a problem that deserves attention.

WHEN AN ALLEGATION OCCURS

If any volunteer leader has concern for the safety or well-being of any child, youth or other vulnerable person in Glory Lutheran Church s/he should report it immediately to the pastor or Council Chair who will offer support and assistance in reporting the concern. The pastor or Council Chair will contact the church's lawyer and will obtain from the concerned person all information necessary to complete the SUSPECTED ABUSE REPORT FORM.

If the alleged perpetrator is a volunteer in Glory Lutheran Church s/he will be advised of the allegation and suspended from his or her duties. S/he will be advised to seek legal counsel. Pastoral care will be offered to all involved.

If the alleged perpetrator is a rostered minister, the incident will be immediately reported to Bishop of the Synod in which the minister is rostered.

If the alleged perpetrator is a non-rostered employee, the incident will be immediately reported to their immediate supervisor.

RESPONDING TO A CHILD, YOUTH OR OTHER VULNERABLE PERSON

When a child, youth or other vulnerable person first comes to you, be sure to take his or her word seriously. Don't deny the problem, but stay calm and listen to the individual. Give emotional support, reminding the individual that he or she is not at fault. Tell the individual that he or she was right in telling you about the problem. Do not promise the individual that "you will not tell anyone."

CONFIDENTIALITY

In these matters it is important to keep the information restricted to those who need to be advised. This means that all suspicions of abuse should be directed only to the Pastor, Bishop, or Council Chair.

The only claim of confidentiality which overrides the legal duty to report may be that of solicitor-client privilege. Thus physicians, clergy and others who consider their professional relationships confidential for certain purposes are not exempt from the duty to report child abuse or neglect.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PASTOR OR COUNCIL CHAIR

As soon as possible after an incident is disclosed the Pastor or Council Chair will:

- In conversation with the person who has made the disclosure, complete the SUSPECTED ABUSE REPORT FORM.
- Advise the person who has made the disclosure to maintain his/her own detailed notes including names, dates, times, places, etc.
- Assist the person who has come to you to contact appropriate authorities. An in-depth investigation will be left to professionals who are familiar with such cases.
- Take the allegations seriously without prejudging the situation and reach out to the victim and the victim's family. Showing care and support help to prevent further hurt and extending whatever pastoral resources are appropriate. The care and safety of the victim is the first priority.
- Treat the accused with dignity and support. If the accused is an approved volunteer, that person should be suspended from his or her duties until the investigation is finished. If the person is a paid employee, they will be suspended from his/her duties until the investigation is finished. He/she will be fully paid leave for up to 90 days subject to review by Church Council.

- “In the event of alleged defection in doctrine or alleged conduct unbecoming a pastor, the matter will be referred by the Congregational Council to the bishop for action as provided in the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada.” *Article VII – The Office of the Ministry – Section 7 of the constitution.*

PROTECTION FROM LIABILITY

Church personnel are required to immediately report to the appropriate local authorities any suspected case of child abuse. It is not a breach of confidence between church personnel and the child involved. No person is personally liable for anything done or omitted in good faith in the exercise of this responsibility. Church leaders are accountable to God to protect God’s children. Although protecting parents as much as possible from undue interference by outside authorities may be desirable, the protection of children from abuse is more important.

As part of a child protection investigation, social workers are required under the Child and Family Services Act to assess:

- the child’s current state of health;
- their sense of safety and their views of abuse;
- previous abuse, neglect or harm; and
- the ability of the parent(s) to care for and protect the child.

The social worker will talk to people who have contact with the victim and family. They may request records or other types of information. They are entitled to whatever information is needed to complete an investigation. If denied access to a record, they can seek a court order.

WHO MUST REPORT

All persons who have “reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection” have an obligation to report.

REPORT FOLLOW-UP

A SUSPECTED ABUSE FOLLOW-UP REPORT FORM should always be completed by a pastor following a report of suspected abuse. Completed SUSPECTED ABUSE REPORT FORM and SUSPECTED ABUSE FOLLOW-UP REPORT FORM should be kept in a confidential file.

4. RESPONSE TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

Realistically, no practical prevention strategy is completely effective. An accusation of sexual abuse may occur in any church. The *Policy to Protect Children, Youth and other Vulnerable People in Glory Lutheran Church* contains an approved strategy to respond to allegations of abuse.

Glory Lutheran Church’s response strategy recognizes the following underlying principles:

- All allegations are to be taken seriously.
- Situations must be handled forthrightly with due respect for people’s privacy and confidentiality.
- Full co-operation must be given to civil authorities under the guidance of the church lawyer.
- Adequate care must be shown for the well-being of victims.
- The victim should not be held responsible in any way.

RECORDS

Records of volunteer applications and related material will be maintained. Records shall be kept at least seven years in a safe and accessible location, honouring their confidentiality.

SPOKESPERSON

The pastor or Congregational Council chairperson of Glory Lutheran Church will serve as the spokesperson for the congregation, ministry or office. S/he will speak to the media and the congregation, ministry or office regarding the matter in a discreet, informed, truthful and diplomatic way.

POSITION OF THE CONGREGATION, MINISTRY OR OFFICE

In the case of an allegation of abuse, the following points would be made until all of the facts are uncovered and the case reviewed:

- It is always tragic when individuals are abused or exploited.
- The congregation/ministry/office is aware of the toll which any form of abuse takes.
- Careful precautions have been taken to protect the children entrusted to the church's care.
- Accusations of abuse are distressing to the church.
- The congregation/ministry/office will do all in its power to address any needs in this situation.
- For the welfare of those involved, all information has been directed to the appropriate authorities.

CONDUCT AND COUNSEL

Glory Lutheran Church's congregation/ministry/office will not engage in denial, minimization, or blame.

- It will not be denied that the incident occurred; all allegations are taken seriously. Once a formal complaint has been made, even if there is clear evidence to the contrary, the church is under a responsibility to follow this policy's process.
- The nature of the incident will not be minimized by saying such things as "It only happened once," or "It wasn't that serious."
- The victim or the victim's family will not be blamed.
- The church will not be accusatory.

Divulging details of an accusation in any public interview will not be tolerated. The church will endeavour to have its lawyer present while answering any investigative questions from the police or social service agencies. The accused will be advised to seek legal counsel and will be offered pastoral care.

5. IMPLEMENTATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The topic of abuse and the introduction of the *Policy to Protect Children, Youth and Other Vulnerable People in Glory Lutheran Church* will create a variety of reactions among church members. Many will solidly support the adoption of the policy. Some will have questions while some may have reservations.

The need for such a policy will be presented in introductory sessions and opportunity for feedback will be provided. The pastor or congregational council chairperson will be available to address concerns and provide specific answers about the policy.

PRESENTATION OF THE POLICY

The following key points will be made:

- Sexual abuse can happen in the church.
- One incident can devastate a child, a family and the church.

- The legal liabilities can be enormous.
- Church leaders may be held liable.
- A prevention program can reduce risk through relatively simple procedures.

On an ongoing basis, members of the congregation will be kept informed of the key issues pertaining to abuse and why a decision was made to establish a prevention plan. This will continue to nurture a commitment within the church membership to maintain a safe environment for all children, youth and other vulnerable people. The climate in these presentations will be one of hope. The church community will realize that Glory Lutheran Church is taking action to address the real needs of our community. The focus will be upon the great responsibility God has given to us to care for our children.

MONITORING OF THE POLICY

Ministry leaders – especially the pastor, Kid’s Church coordinators, Christian Education Committee members, youth advisors – will review the guidelines set out in the policy as part of program planning. This monitoring will examine the following:

- Have volunteers/staff been trained regarding these policies?
- Are volunteers/staff following the required policies and procedures?
- What obstacles exist to compliance with these policies?
- What is the level of cooperation?
- Do sufficient materials exist for training and information?
- Are the policies current and readily available?

If problems exist in the policies, they should be brought to the attention of the pastor or Council Chair. Helpful revisions that do not sacrifice the integrity of the policy are welcomed.

EDUCATION OF SALARIED STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Routines will be established for the training of all new staff and volunteers who serve the church.

A. Salaried Staff

Salaried staff who will be working with children or youth will be introduced to the *Policy to Protect Children, Youth and Other Vulnerable People* upon being called or hired. A police records check is mandatory.

B. New Volunteers

Training or orientation sessions about the policy will occur in the congregation/ministry at least once a year. Depending upon the circumstances and the time of year, an individual training session may also be offered for a volunteer who joins a program mid-Year.

Individuals who apply to begin in ministry after a program is under way must still complete the volunteer approval process. The initial policy orientation/training session may be arranged on an individual or small-group basis.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Glory Lutheran Church will avoid any undue interference when a report of abuse has been filed with the appropriate authorities. The pastor or Council Chair will ask the agency how the congregation, ministry or office can assist in helping and supporting the hurting victim and his or her family. Pastoral care will be offered to the victim and those suspected or guilty of abuse. This does not exclude the need for individuals to receive professional counselling.

Notes:

- Glory Lutheran Church is grateful to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada for this policy.