

Resolution #3

Submitted by: United Lutheran Church, Gonvick, Minnesota

A Resolution Rejecting Recommendations on Ministry Policy and Affirming Current ELCA Policy

1 WHEREAS, as Lutherans “We believe, teach, and confess that the only rule and
2 guiding principle according to which all teachings and teachers are to be
3 evaluated and judged are the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old
4 and New Testaments alone”[1], and

5 WHEREAS, many passages in Scripture both speak, and have been consistently
6 throughout history heard to speak, in a plain and unambiguous voice
7 concerning marriage and the exercise of human sexuality, and

8 WHEREAS, the Scriptures teach very positively of God’s design for marriage as
9 reflected in the words of our Lord Jesus, “Have you not read that he who
10 made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘For
11 this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his
12 wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two but
13 one flesh” (Matt. 19:4-6a RSV); and

14 ~~WHEREAS, a majority of ELCA members, and most Christian churches—including~~
15 ~~most in the Lutheran World Federation—believe that marriage is a~~
16 ~~lifelong covenant between one man and one woman; and~~

17 WHEREAS, a change in ELCA teaching and policy regarding the possibility of same-
18 sex sexual relationships for pastors and other rostered leaders in the ELCA

19 has the potential to damage the ELCA's relationship and cooperative work
20 with Lutherans and other Christians both in the United States and
21 worldwide; and

22 WHEREAS, a similar proposal to change the ELCA's teaching and policy on this issue
23 was brought up and defeated at the 2005 ELCA Churchwide Assembly;
24 and

25 WHEREAS, the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly will consider the *Report and*
26 *Recommendation on Ministry Policies* from the Task Force for ELCA
27 Studies on Sexuality which asks the ELCA to change its teaching and
28 policy to affirm the possibility of same-sex sexual relationships for pastors
29 and other rostered leaders in the ELCA; and

30 WHEREAS, a synodical or congregational option on ministry standards would
31 represent a real change in the teaching of our church forcing even those
32 synods and congregations that do not agree with this change implicitly to
33 accept the notion that Scripture is not clear in its teaching about marriage
34 or about homosexual behavior; and

35 WHEREAS, the interdependent relationship between the churchwide, synod, and
36 congregation expressions of the ELCA requires one Office of Ministry,
37 one roster of pastors, and one set of expectations for pastors and other
38 rostered leaders throughout the ELCA; and

39 WHEREAS, the ELCA currently expresses its expectations of pastors and other
40 rostered leaders through documents called *Vision and Expectations*[2] and
41 *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline* which are in harmony with the
42 plain sense of Scripture and its overwhelming understanding throughout
43 history; therefore be it

44 RESOLVED, that the Northwestern Minnesota Synod Assembly thank the members of
45 the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality for their work; and be it
46 further

47 RESOLVED, that the Northwestern Minnesota Synod Assembly memorialize the 2009
48 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to reject the proposals in the *Report and*
49 *Recommendation on Ministry Policies* from the Task Force for ELCA
50 Studies on Sexuality; and be it further

51 RESOLVED, that the Northwestern Minnesota Synod Assembly memorialize the 2009
52 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to reaffirm the ELCA's current standards
53 for pastors and other rostered leaders as expressed in *Vision and*
54 *Expectations and Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline*

55

56 RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMITTEE ON REFERENCE AND COUNSEL:

57 **To consider.**

58 RECOMMENDATION OF THE SYNOD COUNCIL:

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[1] Formula of Concord, The Epitome, 1. – *The Book of Concord*, Edited by Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, Fortress Press.

[2] Especially pertinent are the lines: “Single ordained ministers are expected to live a chaste life. Married ordained ministers are expected to live in fidelity to their spouses, giving expression to sexual intimacy within a marriage relationship that is mutual, chaste, and faithful. Ordained ministers who are homosexual in their self-understanding are expected to abstain from homosexual sexual relationships.”
