

### **Resolution #3**

Submitted by: United Lutheran Church Council, 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 guiding principle  
2                   according to which all teachings and teachers are to be evaluated and judged are the  
3                   prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments alone”[1], and
- 4   WHEREAS,     many passages in Scripture both speak, and have been consistently throughout history  
5                   heard to speak, in a plain and unambiguous voice concerning marriage and the exercise  
6                   of human sexuality, and
- 7   WHEREAS,     the Scriptures teach very positively of God’s design for marriage as reflected in the words  
8                   of our Lord Jesus, “Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made  
9                   them male and female, and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother  
10                  and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two  
11                  but one flesh” (Matt. 19:4-6a RSV); and
- 12   WHEREAS,    a majority of ELCA members, and most Christian churches - including most in the  
13                  Lutheran World Federation – believe that marriage is a lifelong covenant between one  
14                  man and one woman; and
- 15   WHEREAS,    a change in ELCA teaching and policy regarding the possibility of same-sex sexual  
16                  relationships for pastors and other rostered leaders in the ELCA has the potential to  
17                  damage the ELCA’s relationship and cooperative work with Lutherans and other  
18                  Christians both in the United States and worldwide; and
- 19   WHEREAS,    a similar proposal to change the ELCA’s teaching and policy on this issue was brought  
20                  up and defeated at the 2005 ELCA Churchwide Assembly; and
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21 WHEREAS, the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly will consider the *Report and Recommendation on*  
22 *Ministry Policies* from the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality which asks the  
23 ELCA to change its teaching and policy to affirm the possibility of same-sex sexual  
24 relationships for pastors and other rostered leaders in the ELCA; and

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

29 WHEREAS, the interdependent relationship between the churchwide, synod, and congregation  
30 expressions of the ELCA requires one Office of Ministry, one roster of pastors, and one  
31 set of expectations for pastors and other rostered leaders throughout the ELCA; and

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

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

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

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

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46 RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMITTEE ON REFERENCE AND COUNSEL: **To consider.**

47 RECOMMENDATION OF THE SYNOD COUNCIL: \_\_\_\_\_

[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.”

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