

Endorsing Restraint in the Administration of ELCA Policies Applicable to Gay and Lesbian Persons Called to Ministry

1 **WHEREAS**, the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
2 (ELCA) urged our church “to concentrate on finding ways to live together faithfully in the midst of
3 our disagreements;” and
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5 **WHEREAS**, service in the rostered ministry of the ELCA is neither a right to be claimed nor a
6 privilege bestowed, rather it is the duty and obligation of both candidates and the church to discern
7 the calling of God for service in the rostered ministry by specific persons and this vocation is
8 confirmed by call of the church to a specific ministry; and
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10 **WHEREAS**, there are instances where the process of discernment has identified candidates and
11 settings for rostered ministry where the only impediment to the call of the church is the ELCA
12 policy precluding service by gay and lesbian persons living in same-gendered covenanted
13 relationships; and
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15 **WHEREAS**, congregations have expressed their willingness to receive the ministry of gay and
16 lesbian pastors and leaders who are living in covenanted relationships; therefore be it
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18 **RESOLVED**, that in furtherance of the goal of “finding ways to live together faithfully in the midst
19 of our disagreements” the Minneapolis Area Synod (MAS) in Assembly hereby endorses and
20 encourages the exercise of prophetic witness and disciplinary restraint by the MAS Bishop, Synod
21 Council, Candidacy Committee, and any disciplinary committees with responsibilities for the
22 rostered ministries of the MAS (collectively, "MAS Authorities") in the administration of any
23 policies that impede gay and lesbian persons living in covenanted relationships from full service in
24 rostered ministry; and be it further
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26 **RESOLVED**, that it is the guidance of this MAS in Assembly that with respect to the
27 administration of policies which impede the full service in ministry of gay and lesbian persons
28 living in covenanted relationships, the MAS Authorities shall be guided primarily by how the
29 mission and pastoral needs of the MAS and its congregations would best be served; and be it further
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31 **RESOLVED**, that this guidance in no way applies to any covenanted relationship in which there is
32 clear evidence of abuse, infidelity, or exploitation of one person by another; and finally be it
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34 **RESOLVED**, that the MAS requests that the MAS Council encourage other synods and theological
35 seminaries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) to join us in endorsing the
36 practice of disciplinary restraint in the administration of policies regarding gay and lesbian persons
37 living in covenanted relationships as a part of the continuing discernment process of the ELCA.

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The Reference and Counsel Committee (RCC) forwards this resolution to the MAS Assembly for consideration, without recommendation. RCC has refrained from making a recommendation in order that the Assembly may, in its deliberations, properly focus on the substance of this resolution rather than on the actions of the Committee.