

A Memorial to Encourage Refraining from Discipline

1 WHEREAS there is currently no consensus in this church regarding the rostered service
2 of persons in committed same-gender relationships (Report of the Task Force for ELCA
3 Studies on Sexuality, p.5), and

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5 WHEREAS the 2005 ELCA Churchwide Assembly urged every part of the ELCA to
6 “concentrate on finding ways to live together faithfully in the midst of disagreements,
7 recognizing the God-given mission and communion that we share as members of the
8 body of Christ,” (CA05.05.17, see background information), therefore be it

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10 RESOLVED that the 2007 Minneapolis Area Synod Assembly memorialize the 2007
11 ELCA Churchwide Assembly: that in order to “live together faithfully in the midst of
12 disagreements,” synods, synodical bishops, and the presiding bishop of this church be
13 encouraged to refrain from disciplining those who—in good conscience and for the sake
14 of outreach, ministry, and commitment to continuing dialogue—call, approve, ordain,
15 commission, or consecrate otherwise-qualified candidates for rostered service who are in
16 a mutual, chaste, and faithful committed same-gender relationship, and be it finally

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18 RESOLVED that synods, through their councils, synodical bishops, and the ELCA,
19 through its council and presiding bishop of this church be encouraged to refrain from
20 disciplining those rostered leaders in a mutual, chaste, and faithful committed same-
21 gender relationship who have been thus called, approved, ordained, commissioned, or
22 consecrated.

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Adopted by: Central Conference Assembly, March 18, 2007

South Minneapolis Conference Assembly, March 22, 2007

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The Reference and Counsel Committee recommends adoption of this resolution.

Background Information

An Opinion on the Constitutionality of RC 2007-09 and RC 2007-10

In March 2007 the Reference and Counsel Committee invited the Office of the Secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for an opinion on the constitutionality of these two resolutions, anticipating questions that Voting Members of the Minneapolis Area Synod Assembly might reasonably ask. The Rev. Ruth Hamilton of the Office of the Secretary responded on March 29, 2007 with the following:

These are two of the three model memorials being distributed by Goodsoil. They were discussed extensively at the March Conference of Bishops meeting. In the opinion of the secretary and general counsel of this church, they can be considered at synod assemblies. The two that you have received, if understood as a sense motion from the assembly only, are in order. Attached is a statement from the Conference of Bishops about this matter.

Message of the Conference of Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America March 6, 2007

This pastoral message of the Conference of Bishops is offered as we prepare for upcoming Synod Assemblies and the 2007 ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

We remind this church that the 2005 Churchwide Assembly resolved that the “members, congregations, synods, churchwide organization, and agencies and institutions [of this church] be urged to concentrate on finding ways to live together faithfully in the midst of disagreements, recognizing the God-given mission and communion that we share as members of the body of Christ” (CA05.05.17).

This church is engaged in a careful study of issues related to human sexuality with the intention of adopting a social statement at the 2009 Churchwide Assembly. We urge the members of this church to engage fully and faithfully in the study process as part of our “living together faithfully” during this time.

We trust the Holy Spirit to guide us and have confidence in the constitutional process that orders our conversation as we engage together in moral deliberation at Synod Assemblies and the Churchwide Assembly.

The Conference of Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America commits itself to faithful leadership as, together, we seek the mind of Christ on these matters.