RC2010-1A

Resolution Concerning Augsburg Fortress Pension Plan Termination

WHEREAS, "'Social statements establish policy for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's (ELCA) work in the areas of advocacy and corporate social responsibility, enabling, limiting, and directing these activities.' (Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns, p.13). Social policy resolutions serve the same function"; and

WHEREAS, in 1999 the ELCA adopted a social statement entitled, "Economic Life: Sufficient Sustainable Livelihood for All," which states, "God is at work in economic life. Economic life is intended to be a means through which God's purposes for humankind and creation are to be served. When this does not occur, as a church we cannot remain silent because of who and whose we are"; and

WHEREAS, that statement further says, "We commit ourselves as a church to:… provide adequate pension and health benefits, safe and healthy work conditions, sufficient periods of rest, vacation, and sabbatical, and family-friendly work schedules"; and

WHEREAS, Augsburg Fortress Publishers [legally incorporated as "The Publishing House of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America"], a unit of this church, has terminated its defined-benefit pension plan thereby eliminating the lifetime annuity payments promised through the plan; and

WHEREAS, The Augsburg Fortress Publishers' action places 175 retired persons in diminished financial positions and an additional 325 past and present employees, many of whom have worked for 20, 25, or 30 years for the ELCA publishing ministry, with the prospect of spending their end-of-life years with incomes below the established poverty lines; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that in keeping with stated policy to provide "adequate pension and health benefits," the ELCA Church Council seek means of funding the pension accounts of the faithful servants – retirees and past and present employees who were promised annuity benefits through the recently terminated Augsburg Fortress defined-benefit pension plan.

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Adopted by:	Northwest Conference in assembly on February 21, 2010	
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