

Resolution #1

Draft Resolutions for the 2010 Assembly of the South Carolina Synod

A RESOLUTION ON THE “BOUND CONSCIENCE” OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA SYNOD WITH RESPECT TO CHANGES IN MINISTRY POLICIES IN THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AMERICA

WHEREAS, The 2009 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA has adopted 4 Recommendations on Ministry Policies (CA09.05.23; CA09.05.24; CA09.05.26; and CA09.05.27), and

WHEREAS, CA09.05.23 states “that in the implementation of any resolutions on ministry policies, the ELCA commit itself to bear one another’s burdens, love the neighbor, and respect the bound consciences of all”, and

WHEREAS, CA09.05.27, in the 2nd “RESOLVED” states “that this church, because of its commitment to respect the bound consciences of all, declare[s] its intent to allow structured flexibility in decision-making regarding the approving or disapproving in candidacy and the extending or not extending of a call to rostered service of a person who is otherwise qualified and who is living or contemplates living in a publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationship”, and

WHEREAS, the 5th “WHEREAS” introducing CA.09.05.27 states, “other members, congregations, candidacy committees, and synods of the ELCA ...believe that this church must maintain an expectation of celibacy for any gay or lesbian person, whether or not that person is in a publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationship, and thus believe that this church cannot call or roster people in such relationships” and

WHEREAS, the ELCA, churchwide, understands that “synods” and “congregations” are valid expressions of “church” with each having ecclesial standing and the capacity to make corporate decisions in assemblies and congregational meetings, and

WHEREAS, it is evident from portions of the materials adopted and presented at the 2009 Churchwide Assembly that “all” those whose “bound conscience” the assembly has committed the ELCA to respect, include synods, and that this “bound conscience” includes the ability to choose not to approve, call, commission, consecrate, or ordain someone in a publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationship, and

WHEREAS the adoption of the social statement on human sexuality, *“Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust*, precipitated changes in ministry policies thereby altering *Vision and Expectations*, (1990) which is the policy adopted and affirmed by the South Carolina Synod and which is currently in effect; and

WHEREAS, the “bound conscience” of the South Carolina Synod can most clearly be determined by the actions taken at synod assembly,

NOW THEREFORE, be it:

RESOLVED, that the South Carolina Synod in Assembly, recognizing the actions of previous Synod Assemblies as evidence of the South Carolina Synod's bound conscience with respect to the approving, calling, commissioning, consecrating, or ordaining of persons in publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships, determines that the standards for rostered ministry as outlined in the 1990 documents, *Vision and Expectations* and "Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline" shall remain in effect for the South Carolina Synod, and

Be it further

RESOLVED, that the South Carolina Synod Assembly direct the South Carolina Synod Candidacy Committee and the Office of Bishop of the South Carolina Synod to continue to be guided by such standards for rostered ministry in this Synod, and

Be it further

RESOLVED, that the South Carolina Synod Assembly adopt the following Continuing Resolution at its 2010 Synod Assembly:

In addition to the standards for ordained ministers in the current *Vision and Expectations* as adopted by the ELCA Church Council, this synod shall continue to maintain this expectation from *Vision & Expectations* (1990) in its candidacy process and in its standards for pastors and other rostered leaders, as follows:

Ordained ministers, whether married or single, are expected to uphold an understanding of marriage in their public ministry as well as in private life that is biblically informed and consistent with the teachings of this synod. The expectations of this synod regarding the sexual conduct of its ordained ministers are grounded in the understanding that human sexuality is a gift from God and that ordained ministers are to live in such a way as to honor this gift. Ordained ministers are expected to reject sexual promiscuity, the manipulation of others for purposes of sexual gratification, and all attempts of sexual seduction and sexual harassment, including taking physical or emotional advantage of others. 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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