

In August of 2009, the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America approved and adopted its tenth social statement *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust*. Additionally, the following resolutions, grounded in that document, were also adopted.

**Resolution 3:** “Resolved, 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.”

**Resolution 1:** “Resolved, that the ELCA commit itself to finding ways to allow congregations that choose to do so to recognize, support and hold publicly accountable lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships.”

**Resolution 2:** “Resolved, that the ELCA commit itself to finding a way for people in such publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships to serve as rostered leaders of this church.”

**Resolution 4:** This resolution called upon members to respect the bound consciences of those with whom they disagree; declared the intent to allow structured flexibility in decision-making about candidacy and the call process; eliminated the prohibition of rostered service by members in publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous same-gender relationships; recognized and committed to respect the conviction of members who believe that the ELCA should not call or roster people in committed same-gender relationships; called for development of accountability guidelines; directed that appropriate amendments to ministry policy documents be drafted and approved by the Church Council; and urged that this church continue to trust congregations, bishops, synods and others responsible for determining who should be called into public ministry.

This document and its subsequent resolutions are historic. They contradict both previously released teaching of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the generally accepted teaching tradition of the Christian faith.

WHEREAS, there are many laudable and faithful parts of the social statement *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust*, there are also grave concerns regarding the theology and faithfulness of the document, and

WHEREAS the Lutheran tradition has demonstrated at Worms, Marburg and elsewhere that our consciences are rightly bound only when bound to the Word of God, and

WHEREAS, Resolution 3 calls for the respect for bound consciences—even as the term “bound conscience” and its consequent theology are not clearly defined in the constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its social statements, and

WHEREAS, Resolution 1 calls for the church find a way “to recognize, support and hold publicly accountable lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships” even when such a resolution runs contrary to the greater Christian tradition since its birth at Pentecost, contrary to consistent and historic Lutheran practices and teachings, and contrary to the generally agreed teaching of the vast majority of Christian bodies today, and

WHEREAS, Resolution 2 calls for the church to find a way “for people in such publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships to serve as rostered leaders of this church” even when such a resolution runs contrary to the greater Christian tradition since its birth at Pentecost, contrary to consistent and historic Lutheran practices and teachings, and contrary to the generally agreed teaching of the vast majority of Christian bodies today,

WHEREAS, Resolution 4 and the resolutions in total have codified, urged and made public a permanent witness to a significant and real division within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED PASTORS AND ROSTERED LEADERS OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA SYNOD OF EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA, ARE NOW RESOLVED TO:

- give thanks to God for the gift of the Holy Scriptures, and
- remain committed to our vows of ordination or commission when we vowed that we would preach and teach in accord with the Holy Scriptures and the historic creeds of the Church, and that we would continually affirm that the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God and are the norm of its faith and life, and when we acknowledged that the Lutheran Confessions are true witnesses and faithful expositions of the Holy Scriptures, and
- uphold faithful marriage between man and woman as God’s intent for the exclusive expression of human sexuality, and

- ❑ declare the current use of the term “bound conscience” in the social statement *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* and its subsequent resolutions to be too nebulous to provide faithful teaching in the church, and
- ❑ furthermore believe that any conceivable way the church could recognize, support and hold publicly accountable monogamous, same-gender relationships would be through a human-made invention having no basis in the Holy Scriptures and carrying with it no assurance of God’s blessing, and
- ❑ view the passage of the resolutions as establishing a false unity within the ELCA that impedes the proclamation of the gracious true unity found in Jesus Christ through Word and Sacrament.

FURTHER, THE UNDERSIGNED ARE RESOLVED TO:

- ❑ form an association, the Orthodox Lutherans of South Carolina, so that we might guide one another in faithful response to the current conditions in the ELCA, the South Carolina Synod and our respective congregations, and
- ❑ encourage commitment to reforming the historic South Carolina Synod insofar as it can remain a voice for the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and
- ❑ remind all that we are to speak the truth in love without neglecting either love or truth, and
- ❑ reject the prevailing false dilemma expressed in many of the arguments given on the floor of the 2009 Churchwide Assembly and often repeated in discussions to this day that the church—in modeling Jesus—must choose between “being welcoming to all” or “urging the sinner to repentance” when, in fact, our Lord Jesus Christ did both, and
- ❑ urge those assigned to implementing the aforementioned 2009 resolutions to realize and declare those resolutions contradictory to themselves and to unity of the church.