

2018 SWCA Synod Assembly Resolutions

18-01

No Way to Treat a Child: Protecting the Human Rights of Palestinian Children Living Under Israeli Military Occupation

WHEREAS the ELCA, in 2005, established an initiative, "Peace Not Walls: Stand for Justice in the Holy Land," with three components- Awareness Building, Accompaniment and Advocacy which seeks "peace with justice for both Palestinians and Israelis and the continuation of the Christian witness in the Holy Land;" and

WHEREAS the ELCA, in its Social Statement "For Peace in God's World" has committed to promote respect for human rights, especially for "groups most susceptible to violations, especially all minorities, women, and children;" and

WHEREAS the ELCA is in relationship with the six Lutheran congregations in the Bethlehem area, Ramallah, and Jerusalem (the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land); and

WHEREAS Israel operates two separate and unequal legal systems in the same territory. Military law has applied to Palestinians in the West Bank since 1967, when Israeli forces occupied the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. Jewish settlers, however, who reside within the bounds of the occupied West Bank, in violation of international law, are subject to the Israeli civilian legal framework; and

WHEREAS Israel is the only country in the world that automatically and systematically prosecutes children in military courts that lack fundamental fair trial rights and protections; detaining and prosecuting an estimated 500 to 700 Palestinian children in military courts each year, and

WHEREAS Palestinian children detained in the Israeli military detention system commonly report being arrested in the middle of the night and typically arrive to interrogation bound, blindfolded, frightened, and sleep deprived, and often give confessions after verbal abuse, threats, physical and psychological violence that in some cases amounts to torture. Israeli military law provides no right to legal counsel during interrogation; 96 percent of children have no parents present during interrogation, and

WHEREAS Israel has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child on October 3, 1991, which states-in article 37(a), that "no child shall be subject to torture or other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment;" and

WHEREAS, after 50 years of Israeli military occupation the situation for children living in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip) continues to deteriorate, making children increasingly vulnerable; therefore be it

RESOLVED that the Southwest California Synod Assembly call on the State of Israel to guarantee basic due process rights in the Israeli military court system; respect and ensure the absolute prohibition against torture and ill-treatment in accordance with international law; and from the moment of arrest, operations and procedures must be carried out in accordance with international juvenile justice standards, specifically the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; and call on the government of the United States to fully implement and enforce its own established law, including the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act, by monitoring and tracking gross human rights violations committed by Israeli armed forces and police and ensuring that U.S. military and financial assistance is provided to the Government of Israel in accordance with existing U.S. law; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Assembly ask the Bishop of this synod to advocate with elected officials, encouraging them to ensure that United States taxpayer funds, including the over \$3 billion annual foreign aid to Israel, do not support military detention, interrogation, abuse, or ill- treatment of Palestinian children in violation of international law, including, but not limited to: cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment, stress positions, hooding, death threats, coerced confessions, and denial of parents or legal counsel during interrogations; and be it further

RESOLVED that congregations of the Southwest California Synod provide study opportunities to learn more about the lives of Palestinian children—especially the treatment of Palestinian children in the Israeli military courts, the Lutherans in the six congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, and how Israel is spending our U.S. foreign aid dollars; and be it further

RESOLVED that members of the Southwest California Synod be encouraged to contact their members of Congress to support legislation that prohibits U.S. foreign aid to be used in ways that violate human rights for Palestinian children, like H.R. 4391, 115th Congress, which requires the Secretary of State to certify that United States funds do not support military detention, interrogation, abuse, or ill-treatment of Palestinian children in violation of international law.

18-02

The Revocation of Temporary Protective Status for El Salvadorans

WHEREAS, as members of the Southwest Synod of the ELCA, we are in partnership with the Lutheran Church in El Salvador with several of our synod churches connected with sister congregations and concerned for the welfare of its citizens and

WHEREAS the United States Homeland Security Secretary has revoked as of September 9, 2019 the Temporary Protective Status (TPS) for Salvadorans, which was declared as a result of two devastating earthquakes in 2001 and

WHEREAS eliminating residency permits for 200,000 Salvadoran migrants could cause far reaching disruption in El Salvador, including a steep decline in remittances, a destabilizing wave of returning citizens to a homeland still racked by violence (San Salvador, the capital, is considered one of the most dangerous cities on earth.) and further reducing the economy which according to the World Bank, in 2016 already had the slowest growth of any Central American country and

WHEREAS only Congress can legislate a permanent solution addressing the lack of lawful immigration status of those currently protected by TPS and the 18 month delay will allow Congress the time to craft a potential legislative solution, therefore be it

RESOLVED that we encourage our congregations to give support to our Salvadoran brothers and sisters by writing letters to congressional representatives asking them to support legislation that will give permanent status to Salvadorans; and be it further

RESOLVED that we educate our congregations about the consequences for both the United States and El Salvador as a result of the termination of the TPS to Salvadorans; and be it further

RESOLVED that we hold our Salvadoran brother and sisters in prayer in this uncertain time of immigration status.

18-03

Memorial on the ELCA's 50th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women

WHEREAS, in 1970 both the Lutheran Church in America and American Lutheran Church in their national conventions voted to ordain women; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA rejoices in these actions of its predecessor church bodies and will recognize the 50th anniversary in 2020 of the ordination of women; and

WHEREAS, we express our profound gratitude for the many and varied ways the gifts of ordained women have advanced God's mission through this church; and

WHEREAS, we learned in the research related to the 45th anniversary of women's ordination of some progress but also significant disparities for women in the areas of preparation for ministry, all calls including first calls, mobility, compensation, ministry roles, and debt following seminary education and

WHEREAS, the same research uncovered denigrating and discriminatory experiences of many ordained women, some particularly acute for ordained women of color; and

WHEREAS, the church is called to reflect in church and society its roles of advocate and model for the respect, dignity, and equal rights due all women, including the ordained women of this church; and

WHEREAS, this church is simultaneously addressing justice and women in its social statement under consideration and the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we call upon all synods in their 2020 assemblies to include celebration and special recognition of ordained women upon the 50th anniversary of authorizing this ordination practice; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we call upon our seminaries, colleges, campus ministries, outdoor ministries, social ministry organizations, synods, and congregations to highlight women preachers, teachers and speakers throughout 2020 in recognition of the diversity of gifts women's ordination has brought to our church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we call upon congregations throughout the ELCA to participate in the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women in our church through worship services, Bible studies and other efforts to celebrate and recognize the importance and contributions of ordained women; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we call upon all members of this church to examine our consciences, and confess our sins and complicity in whichever circumstances by the outright or silent actions women have faced including barriers, discrimination, or sexual harassment as they prepared for and served as ordained women in this church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we call upon this church to renew efforts in education on the intersection of the sins of sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia, and classism, and to develop healing interventions offering hope and support to those who experience these sins to the point of despair about ministry; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we call upon our seminaries to include intentional coursework and resources to equip pastoral leaders in identifying and ministering in situations of gender-based discrimination and violence; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we urge all congregations, synods, and the Churchwide organization in 2020 to conduct a gender analysis wherein each can develop strategies to promote and protect gender equity and justice, with particular focus on addressing the areas of preparation for ministry, call process including first calls, mobility, compensation, ministry roles, and debt following seminary education; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we call upon this church to establish goals and strategies in each synod of achieving for ordained women comparable compensation with that of ordained men in all calls by 2025, reporting

the outcome of this action step at the Churchwide Assembly in 2026;
and be it further

RESOLVED, that we call upon this church to establish goals and strategies in each synod of achieving for ordained women access to ministry roles where women are currently underrepresented, with a particular focus on the challenges faced by women of color receiving viable first and second calls; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we call upon the Churchwide expression's Domestic Mission Unit to develop, undertake, and successfully complete a strategy specifically related to the debt of women of color after seminary; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we call upon all candidacy committees to examine their practices in light of the findings in the 45th anniversary research; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we request initiatives and other matters pertinent to the full and just participation of ordained women in this church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we request all church publications to plan features in 2020 on the ordination of women, lifting up the amazing talents and gifts this church has received from its ordained women, the barriers ordained women still experience in this church, and the steps outlined in this memorial to overcome these barriers; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we invite the prayers of all members of this church for the successful outcome of these initiatives; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southwest California Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to affirm this resolution.

18-04

**Offering Options to Curb Overpopulation and
Overconsumption**

WHEREAS, overpopulation and overconsumption of natural resources are the primary drivers of the current and ongoing Creation Crisis*;
AND

WHEREAS, both overpopulation and overconsumption are issues that humans can do something about; AND

WHEREAS, the ELCA motto “God’s Work. Our Hands.” implies that we of the ELCA believe that God forgives us our sins of omission and commission, and that we are to do God’s work while not expecting God to make everything OK; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we of the SWCA Synod commit ourselves to offer options to curb overpopulation globally and overconsumption, especially in the US; and be it further

RESOLVED that we memorialize the ELCA at the next Church-wide assembly to commit the ELCA to the same; and be it further

RESOLVED that we urge ELCA World Hunger and Disaster Relief to adopt and implement projects to offer options to curb overpopulation and overconsumption—to our members, synods, agencies and partner organizations and denominations.

18-05

Southwest California Synod Native Protocols

WHEREAS by action of the Southwest California Synod Assembly in 2015 and subsequent action by the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in 2016 (CA16.02.04), the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has “explicitly and clearly” repudiated the Doctrine of Discovery, and stated its intention to “acknowledge and repent from this church’s complicity in the evils of colonialism in the Americas,” and

WHEREAS the ELCA 2016 Churchwide Assembly action provides for ceremonies “of repentance and reconciliation with tribal leaders” on both national and synodical levels and wherever appropriate, and also calls on the church to “practice accompaniment with native peoples” and fostering partnerships to “mutually enrich” native communities and the ministries of the ELCA, and

WHEREAS the Los Angeles metropolitan area contains the largest native population in the United States, with a likely representation of more than 50 tribes and numbering somewhere between 150,000 and 250,000 persons; the five counties of the synod are home to several federally and state-recognized tribes; and several partner churches have established protocols to guide their interactions with the native community; therefore be it

RESOLVED: that the Southwest California Synod adopt the following set of initial protocols for its relationship with the native communities within the synod boundaries, and to provide guidance for its conferences and congregations in engaging in respectful, appropriate ways with native communities and people both within and outside the church.

1. Our Native American neighbors, especially those whose ancestral lands are within the boundaries of the Southwest California Synod, are to be accorded the respect due to them as descendants of the land’s first people, and they and their traditions, history, and culture are to be honored.

2. Recognizing that the number of native members of its congregations is small, the Southwest California Synod will attempt whenever possible to include native people in its activities and programs, especially those relating specifically to ethnic identity or cultural diversity.
3. Whenever possible, formal public gatherings organized and led by the synod or its conferences and congregations shall begin with a recognition of the tribe or tribes on whose ancestral land the synod, conference, or congregation is located. Suggested language for such recognitions and acknowledgements shall be provided by the Office of the Bishop.
4. In public liturgies, particularly baptisms and funerals of Native American members of our church who desire it, consideration is to be given to including native customs that are not incompatible with Christian belief. This inclusion may be made explicit by congregational policy or provided on the basis of pastoral discretion.
5. The synod, conferences, and congregations commit themselves to the respect and protection of native burial sites, and will not purchase them or build on them.
6. Whenever the synod, conferences, or congregations engage in public ceremonies or educational events involving native life or culture, they shall seek to consult with appropriate native resource people to ensure respect and accuracy.