

Report of the Committee on Reference and Counsel

Memorials and resolutions for consideration by the body of the Synod Assembly may come from any institution, agency, synod ministry board, coalition, or congregation, and must bear the signatures of at least five people who are members of congregations of the Southwest California Synod.

Memorials and resolutions enable our Churchwide Organization to address broad policy issues or issues important to God's mission in the world. **Memorials** address broad policy issues, while **Resolutions** have a narrower focus, requesting consideration or action by individual offices, units, or the Church Council. A Reference and Counsel Committee, appointed by the ELCA Church Council, receives memorials from synod assemblies and makes appropriate recommendations for assembly action.

Submitted resolutions and memorials are first reviewed by the Reference and Counsel Committee, which makes recommendations to the Synod Assembly to facilitate its work; however, resolutions and memorials under consideration belong to the assembly and may be amended, rejected, or adopted after consideration by the voting members.

More information about memorials and resolutions, including those passed by previous SWCA Synod Assemblies, can be found on the synod's website at: www.socalsynod.org/swca-synod-resolutions-and-memorials/.

2022 Committee on Reference and Counsel

Ms. Julie Jensen

Mr. Paul Muller

The Rev. Nancy Switzler

The Rev. Ron Cox, Chair

Resolution for an Inclusive Mobility/Call Process Resolution

- WHEREAS, The Southwest California Synod adopted a resolution [repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery](#) in 2016.
- WHEREAS, The ELCA Social Statement “Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture” identifies a major problem being “racism must be confronted in order to build a society where diversity is truly valued.”
- WHEREAS, The ELCA’s Strategic Goal #3 directs the church to be “An inviting and welcoming church that reflects and embraces the diversity of our communities and the gifts and opportunities that diversity brings.”
- WHEREAS, The census reports that the state of California's diversity index increased from 67.7% in 2010 to 69.7% in 2020.
- WHEREAS, The latest ELCA synod statistics about the Southwest California Synod show that at least 70% of our congregations report members from non-european ethnic backgrounds.
- WHEREAS, Of the ELCA’s 227 Black-African American Congregations only 29% have Black-African American Pastors. (<https://www.elca.org/News-and-Events/3896>) *Similar statistics for other ethnic-specific groups was not immediately available.
- WHEREAS, Based on the above statistics and available data about our synod leadership demographics in relation to the growing racial and ethnic diversity in our communities, the Southwest California Synod continues to show an under representation of ordained leaders who are Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC.)
- WHEREAS, The ELCA Document “[How Strategic and Authentic is Our Diversity: A Call to Confession, Reflection, and Healing Action](#)” recommends that the churchwide organization should work with synods to monitor the duration of the call process for people of color, particularly women of color. The average duration of the call process for white males will serve as a benchmark, and people of color still waiting for call after that amount of time has passed will receive priority.” (pg 13)
- WHEREAS, The ELCA Document “[How Strategic and Authentic is Our Diversity: A Call to Confession, Reflection, and Healing Action](#)” recommends that

synods and the churchwide organization should incentivize (through financial support, human resources, student debt forgiveness, etc.) white or predominantly white congregations to call people from marginalized communities.

RESOLVED, that the Southwest California Synod, in Assembly, directs the synod staff to work with each congregation in transition to engage in an inclusive mobility or call process that provides equitable opportunities to candidates of various racial and ethnic backgrounds, gender identities and expressions, and sexual orientations.

RESOLVED, that the Southwest California Synod, in Assembly, assists congregational efforts to create a hospitable and supportive environment for historically marginalized leaders.

RESOLVED, that the Southwest California Synod, in Assembly, task the synod office with an annual report on work of equity in the call process.

RESOLVED, that the Southwest California Synod, in Assembly, asks the Synod Authentic Diversity officer to generate a list of practical, actionable changes to the process to be adopted in the coming year.

RESOLVED, that the Southwest California Synod, in Assembly, implements inclusivity changes within six months of this resolution's adoption.

What is the financial impact of this resolution on our synod budget? If expenditures are required, what are the sources of income anticipated to accomplish the purpose of the resolution?

none.

What are the personnel implications within our synod—or churchwide? Who will be responsible for implementation of the resolution?

This resolution supports the Assistant to the Bishop for mobility in implementing equitable practices in our synod's call processes. This resolution asks for a report about and recommendations regarding equity in the call process.

How does this resolution enhance and forward the mission of the church and our synod?

This resolution reinforces our commitment to employment justice and diversity in our synod.

Signers,

Renee Brandt, Lutheran Church in the Foothills, La Canada Flintridge
 Rev. Caleb Crainer, St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, Los Angeles
 Rev. Sharon Mead Ruff Richter, Trinity Lutheran Church, Pasadena
 Deacon Tempie D. Beaman, Ascension Lutheran Church, Los Angeles
 Rev. Andrew Stever, Hope Lutheran Church, Hollywood
 Rev. Matt Keadle, St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Los Angeles

Memorial Regarding Non-Disclosure Agreements

- WHEREAS, The Prophet Jeremiah writes, “This is what the Lord says: Administer justice and righteousness. Rescue the victim from the hand of the oppressor” (Jeremiah 22:3).
- WHEREAS, The Psalmist writes “It is zeal for your house that has consumed me; the insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.” (Psalm 69: 9)
- WHEREAS, The Gospel of John records, “But Jesus on his part would not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people and needed no one to testify about anyone; for he himself knew what was in everyone.” (John 2:23-25)
- WHEREAS, Martin Luther’s first of the 95 Thesis is “When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said “Repent,” he intended that the entire life of believers should be repentance.”
- WHEREAS, Luther writes, “Now properly speaking, true repentance is nothing else than to have contrition and sorrow, or terror about sin, and yet at the same time to believe in the gospel and absolution that sin is forgiven and grace is obtained through Christ. Such faith, in turn, comforts the heart and puts it at peace” (*The Book of Concord*, p. 44).
- WHEREAS, The Social Statement “Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective” (1991) recognizes that “This church must participate in social structures critically, for sin also is at work in the world. Social structures and processes combine life-giving and life-destroying dynamics in complex mixtures and in varying degrees. This church, therefore, must unite realism and vision, wisdom and courage, in its social responsibility. It needs constantly to discern when to support and when to confront society’s cultural patterns, values, and powers.” (pg 3)
- WHEREAS, Some confidential agreements are necessary when employment ends to protect sensitive information.
- WHEREAS, The original purpose of Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) was to protect intellectual property and personal data not protected elsewhere.
- WHEREAS, NDAs almost always involve an imbalance of power dynamic. (abuser/victim, employer/employee, etc.)
- WHEREAS, Linking separation agreements and financial severance packages (often so that financial compensation is based on non-disclosure compliance) can hinder truth telling and institutional accountability.

- WHEREAS, The ELCA Churchwide Personnel Policies (effective since January 2020) do not specifically outline employee rights during a non-disclosure agreement negotiation.
- WHEREAS, The ELCA Churchwide organization does not currently provide independent legal counsel for employees facing involuntary termination.
- WHEREAS, Employment agreements in Churchwide Offices prohibit disparaging remarks.
- WHEREAS, The ELCA's Constitution and Bylaws states, "In keeping with the historic discipline and practice of the Lutheran church and to be true to a sacred trust inherent in the nature of the pastoral office, no minister of Word and Sacrament of this church shall divulge any confidential disclosure received in the course of the care of souls or otherwise in a professional capacity, nor testify concerning conduct observed by the minister of Word and Sacrament while working in a pastoral capacity, except with the express permission of the person who has given confidential information to the minister of Word and Sacrament or who was observed by the minister of Word and Sacrament, or if the person intends great harm to self or others." (CBCR 7.45.)
- WHEREAS, NDAs have been used by organizations associated with instances of spiritual, sexual, or other kinds of abuse.
- WHEREAS, The ELCA Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline do not provide guidance about NDAs.
- RESOLVED, That the Southwest California Synod, in Assembly, memorializes the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to separate the satisfaction of severance packages from considerations outlined in separation agreements (Non-disparagement agreements, non-disclosure agreements, and others).
- RESOLVED, That the Southwest California Synod, in Assembly, memorializes the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to adopt provisions in guiding documents that provide independent legal counsel to individuals from Congregation, Synod, and Churchwide staff being asked to sign Non-Disclosure Agreements.

Signers,

Renee Brandt, Lutheran Church in the Foothills, La Canada Flintridge
Rev. Caleb Crainer, St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, Los Angeles
Deacon Tempie D. Beaman, Ascension Lutheran Church, Los Angeles
Rev. Matt Keadle, St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Los Angeles
Rev. Emily Ebert, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Thousand Oaks

22-02

4-21-22

Desta Goehner, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Thousand Oaks
Rev. Drew Stever, Hope Lutheran Church, Hollywood
Rev. Jennifer Chrien (she/her), Shepherd of the Valley, Simi Valley
Rev. Roderick Hines, Messiah Lutheran Church, Los Angeles

Resolution for Revision of Human Resources Policies in the Southwest California Synod

- WHEREAS, the ELCA Social Statement "[Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture](#)" states that, "we will listen to our advocates as we examine our own institutional life" and will commit to support resolutions that guarantee equal opportunity for employment with fair compensation." (Page 4)
- WHEREAS "[The Declaration of the ECLA to People of African Descent](#)" (2019) confesses that "Institutional racism currently exists in the ELCA through discriminatory treatment within the call process; inequitable compensation of clergy of color; racial segregation; divestment from black communities and congregations; systemic policies and organizational practices; and failure to fully include the gifts of leadership and worship styles of people of African descent."
- WHEREAS, The Society of Human Resource Management [quotes Dorianne St. Fleur](#), a workplace inclusion strategist, who said, "All people, processes, such as compensation, hiring, promotion, and performance reviews, must be audited, reconfigured and measured regularly to ensure there is no disparity based on race."
- WHEREAS, policies for the Southwest California Synod around staffing issues are only vaguely outlined in the Model Constitution for Synods in items referencing Discipline and Conflict. S13.41 and Chapter 17.
- WHEREAS, Chapter 20 of the [Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America](#) states that, "There shall be set forth in the bylaws a process of discipline governing officers, ministers of Word and Sacrament, ministers of Word and Service, congregations, and members of congregations. Except as provided in 20.18. or 20.19., such process shall assure due process and due protection for the accused, other parties, and this church."
- WHEREAS, Section 20.16 of the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America states that, "It is the intent of this church that all matters of discipline should be resolved internally to the greatest extent possible."
- WHEREAS, Section 20.21 of the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America states that, "The Committee on Appeals shall establish definitions and guidelines, subject to approval by the Church Council, to enable clear and uniform application of the grounds for discipline of officers, rostered ministers, congregations, and members of congregations."
- WHEREAS, The [Southwest California Synod Constitution and Bylaws](#) do not delineate the ability of Rostered Leaders (†S14.18, †S14.43), Mission Developers, Synodically Authorized Ministers (S13.41) and leaders to respond to allegations or issues.

WHEREAS, Section 2.4 of the [ELCA Churchwide Organization Employee Personnel Policies](#) handbook states that “The ELCA is an equal opportunity employer committed to employing individuals who are qualified to meet the responsibilities of their jobs.”

WHEREAS, Sections 8, 9, 10.3, and 10.4 of the ELCA Churchwide Organization Personnel Policies handbook address Discipline and Resolution of inappropriate behavior or other reasons, but lack language delineating a clear and fair process.

WHEREAS, The [Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline](#) proceeds with the assumption of guilt or wrongdoing, lacking a clear process for impartial investigation and mediation.

WHEREAS, The ELCA Statement “[How Strategic and Authentic is our Diversity?](#): A Call for Confession, Reflection, and Healing Action” recommends that the various expressions of the ELCA “encourage individuals to report instances of oppression, exclusion, etc. to a designated person outside their system who will document and facilitate resolution.” (page 11)

RESOLVED, that the Southwest California Synod, in Assembly, directs the review of Human Resources policies and employment practices to focus attention on installing racial equity practices and transparency of processes into our Synodical Human Resources policies.

RESOLVED, that the Southwest California Synod, in Assembly, asks the Synod Council to distribute a list of suggested best practices and resources for diversity, equity, and inclusion to each congregation, council president, and rostered leader in the synod.

What is the financial impact of this resolution on our synod budget? If expenditures are required, what are the sources of income anticipated to accomplish the purpose of the resolution?

Potentially \$0 because this process has already been initiated.

What are the personnel implications within our synod—or churchwide? Who will be responsible for implementation of the resolution?

The Office of the Bishop and Synod Council will work in conjunction with the HR Consultants to identify and adopt updated policies and practices. It seems possible that the Council would choose to activate the Synod Authentic Diversity Team to oversee the process.

How does this resolution enhance and forward the mission of the church and our synod?

This resolution helps us to live into our values of equity and anti-racism by amending or replacing oppressive policies with policies that instill respect and dignity for all of God’s children. By the synod

22-03

April 29, 2022

taking initiative to adjust our policies and practices, it will set a useful example for individual congregations to make similar adjustments.

Signed,

Pastor Caleb Crainer, St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, Los Angeles

Desta Goehner, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Thousand Oaks

Deacon Tempie Beaman, Ascension Lutheran Church, Los Angeles

Renee Brandt, Lutheran Church in the Foothills, La Canada Flintridge

Sharon Richter, Trinity Lutheran Church, Pasadena

Zekiah Wright, ADORE LA, Los Angeles

Memorial Reviewing “On Leave From Call” Status Removal Process

- WHEREAS, The nature of church leadership, worship, and church community is changing rapidly; requiring creativity, innovation, and flexibility.
- WHEREAS, congregations are exploring alternatives to one or more full-time clergy on staff. (ie. part-time ministry, multi-point parishes, contracts)
- WHEREAS, The number of congregations that can afford a full-time clergy person is shrinking.
- WHEREAS, The Southwest California Synod is experiencing a shortage of supply preachers and interim/transition/bridge ministers.
- WHEREAS, The process for handling interim/transition clergy calls, specialized ministry calls, calls for deacons, and “On Leave From Call” status is inconsistent among synods in the ELCA.
- WHEREAS, deacons in general and Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, and Two Spirit (LGBTQIA+2S), disabled, and/or female rostered ministers disproportionately experience extended time in “On Leave From Call” status.
- WHEREAS, removal from the roster due to exceeding “On Leave From Call” status time limits, missing deadlines, or unclear communication is not uncommon.
- WHEREAS, those removed from the roster have no way to effectively challenge their removal.
- RESOLVED, That the Southwest California Synod, in Assembly, memorializes the churchwide council and the council of bishops to suspend removal from the roster due to anything other than formal disciplinary reasons.
- RESOLVED, That the Southwest California Synod, in Assembly, memorializes the churchwide council and council of bishops to create a task force to establish national guidelines for handling interim/transition/bridge calls, specialized ministry calls, other non-parish based or innovative calls (with increased attention to calls for deacons), “On Leave From Call” status, removal from call protocols, removal from roster protocols, and communication protocols. The task force shall include members who are currently (or have recently been) involved in specialized ministries (interim/transition ministry, campus ministry, outdoor ministry, college or seminary professors, chaplains of all sorts, etc), as well as those currently “On Leave From Call” for a variety of reasons (family, personal, disability, between-calls, study, etc.), and to include a minimum of two deacons.

- RESOLVED, That the Southwest California Synod, in Assembly, memorializes Churchwide Assembly to receive a report and recommendations for policy changes to churchwide council and council of bishops prior to the Fall 2024 meeting of the Council of Bishops for evaluation before being presented for consideration for adoption at the 2025 Churchwide Assembly.
- RESOLVED, That the Southwest California Synod, in Assembly, memorializes the 2025 Churchwide Assembly to adopt constitutional amendments that establish a process for rostered leaders to challenge their removal from call and/or roster outside of the synod involved.

Signers,

Renee Brandt, Lutheran Church in the Foothills, La Canada Flintridge
Rev. Caleb Crainer, St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, Los Angeles
Deacon Tempie D. Beaman, Ascension Lutheran Church, Los Angeles
Rev. Matt Keadle, St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Los Angeles
Rev. Emily Ebert, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Thousand Oaks
Desta Goehner, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Thousand Oaks
Rev. Drew Stever, Hope Lutheran Church, Hollywood
Rev. Jennifer Chrien (she/her), Shepherd of the Valley, Simi Valley

Memorial for Adoption of Gender-Inclusive Language

- WHEREAS, The Churchwide Assembly voted to accept the response to memorials about Gender Identity (Churchwide 2019 Assembly Action [CA19.02.09](#) per Category 4: Gender Identity)
- WHEREAS, That we thank the Churchwide Assembly for accepting the Memorial from the Sierra Pacific Synod in 2019 and requesting “that the Church Council consider authorizing development of a social message on gender identity and gender expression.” ([pg 48](#))
- WHEREAS, The [Memorials and Resolutions Report of 2019](#) (adopted above) requested “the Office of the Presiding Bishop provide materials to facilitate education among ELCA members so as to build awareness of the broad varieties of gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation among God's people, as well as to provide pastoral care insights regarding concerns and issues of the transgender experience and gender nonconformity.”
- WHEREAS, In the ELCA Social Statement “Faith, Sexism, and Justice” (adopted in 2019) the ELCA commits to use inclusive language (all genders) for humankind and inclusive and expansive language (other than human) for God. ([pg 8, paragraph 27](#))
- WHEREAS, Some demographic requirements and data collection remains rooted in binary gender norms.
- WHEREAS, Nonbinary and gender expansive lay leaders of our church deserve the use of inclusive language to determine where they are eligible to serve in synod roles.
- RESOLVED, That the Southwest California Synod in Assembly memorialize the Churchwide Assembly to adopt gender-inclusive language across all governance documents, forms and reports by the end of 2022; specifically including options for “gender non-binary” and “other” for all demographic data gathering regarding gender.
- RESOLVED, That the Southwest California Synod in Assembly memorialize The ELCA Church Council to adopt a social message on gender identity and gender expression to be applied throughout ELCA official forms, documents, and resources by 2025.

Signed:

Rev. Caleb Crainer, St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, Los Angeles
Renee Brandt, Lutheran Church in the Foothills, La Canada Flintridge
Rev. Sharon Mead Ruff Richter, Trinity Lutheran Church, Pasadena
Deacon Tempie D. Beaman, Ascension Lutheran Church, Los Angeles

22-05

April 13, 2022

Zekiah Wright, ADORE LA, Los Angeles

Memorial for Review of Conference of Bishops' Relational Agreement

- WHEREAS, The ELCA Constitution (8.11) states, "This church shall seek to function as people of God through congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, all of which shall be interdependent. Each part, while fully the church, recognizes that it is not the whole church and therefore lives in an interdependent relationship with the others."
- WHEREAS, The ELCA Constitution (10.81.01) outlines that, among other duties, the Conference of Bishops shall "respond to referrals from the Church Council."
- WHEREAS, The ELCA Constitution (10.81.A16.a) states that one of the duties of the Conference of Bishops is "be a forum in which goals, objectives, and strategies may be developed and shared concerning pastoral leadership, care, and counsel for the synods."
- WHEREAS, The Relational Agreement adopted by the Conference of Bishops, nor other official documents, does not provide a clear process for accountability between synods.
- RESOLVED, That the Southwest California Synod in Assembly memorialize The ELCA Church Council and the Office of the Presiding Bishop to initiate a review process for the "Bishop's Relational Agreement" for the Conference of Bishops.
- RESOLVED, That the Southwest California Synod in Assembly memorialize the ELCA Church Council to refer recommended changes of the "Bishop's Relational Agreement" to the Conference of Bishops for increased accountability when the actions of one Bishop or Synod may harm other Bishops and Synods.

Signers,

Rev. Caleb Crainer, St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, Los Angeles

Rev. Toni J. Castañeda Carrera, MPP (She, They), Southwest California Synod, California

Pr. Ed Ramirez (they/them), ADORE LA, Los Angeles

Jaffa Castaneda Carrera (he/him), ADORE LA, Los Angeles.

Rev. Jennifer Chrien (she/her), Shepherd of the Valley, Simi Valley

**Memorial Calling for a Just Transition
to 50% Reduction in US Greenhouse Gas Emissions by 2030¹**

WHEREAS, our faith commands us to love “your neighbors as yourselves” (see Luke 10:27); and that we are made in the image of God, we are called to care for the earth as God cares for the earth”²; and

WHEREAS, in the 2016 ELCA Social Policy Resolution, “Repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery.” (CA16.02.04) our denomination committed to “acknowledge and repent from this church’s complicity in the evils of colonialism in the Americas, which continue to harm tribal governments and individual tribal members,”³ and Indigenous communities are disproportionately impacted by pipelines, mines, waste incinerators and other polluting industries that poison the air and water⁴; and

WHEREAS, Indigenous, Black, People of Color and communities impacted by poverty have contributed the least to climate change and are the most impacted by it⁵; and the United States has contributed more greenhouse gas to the atmosphere historically than any other country⁶; and

WHEREAS, in the Earth Charter, adopted by the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, we state that “the global environment with its finite resources is a common concern of all peoples. The protection of Earth’s vitality, diversity, and beauty is a sacred trust”⁷; and

WHEREAS, climate change is already leading to the destruction and displacement of people’s homes, food sources, and well-being (leading to at least 30.7 million climate displaced persons in 2020 according to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC))⁸; and

WHEREAS, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reported that in order to avoid catastrophic consequences of climate change, global warming needs to be limited to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7° Fahrenheit); and

¹ This resolution was based on a template from the Board of Directors of Lutherans Restoring Creation.

² 1993 ELCA Social Statement Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice

³ spas-elca.org

⁴ <https://setac.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/ieam.4239>

⁵ <https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/>

⁶ <https://www.carbonbrief.org/analysis-which-countries-are-historically-responsible-for-climate-change>

⁷ Earth Charter (adopted at the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly), full text which was endorsed can be found at: <https://earthcharter.org/>

⁸ <https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2021/>

WHEREAS, the planet has already warmed 1.1 degrees Celsius (2.1° Fahrenheit) since pre-industrial times, causing record-smashing wildfires, hurricanes, heat waves, droughts, ocean acidification, and species loss⁹; and

WHEREAS, to have a realistic chance of not exceeding 1.5° Celsius of warming the United States must reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50% by 2030 and reach equitable net zero emissions by 2050¹⁰, and the United States will need action similar to that of its mobilization during World War II that includes government investment, public-private partnerships, binding emission reduction targets, and possibly a carbon fee and dividend; and

WHEREAS, a just transition from a fossil-fuel based economy will lead to better health¹¹, family-sustaining jobs¹², clean air and water for communities historically left behind, and a safer, more sustainable future for our children and future generations; therefore, be it,

RESOLVED, that the Southwest California Synod Assembly memorialize the 2022 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to direct the ELCA Churchwide Organization to call upon the leadership of the United States of America to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50% by 2030, generate 100% of its power from clean renewable sources by 2035, and achieve net zero emissions by 2050; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the ELCA Churchwide Organization will continue to equip and encourage congregations, synods, and associated ministries to advocate that the United States of America reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50% by 2030, generate 100% of its power from clean renewable sources by 2035, and achieve net zero emissions by 2050; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the ELCA Churchwide Organization will encourage congregations and synods to advocate for 40% of the public funding for this transition to benefit Indigenous, Black, and People of Color, and communities that have been impacted by the disproportionate effects of pollution and climate change,

RESOLVED, that the ELCA Churchwide Organization will support these actions through continuing its investments in staff, education, tools and resources that equip congregations and Synods to accomplish this goal and leverage knowledge, skills and experience across the church; and be it further

⁹ IPCC, 2021: Summary for Policymakers. In: Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [MassonDelmotte, V., P. Zhai, A. Pirani, S.L. Connors, C. Péan, S. Berger, N. Caud, Y. Chen, L. Goldfarb, M.I. Gomis, M. Huang, K. Leitzell, E. Lonnoy, J.B.R. Matthews, T.K. Maycock, T. Waterfield, O. Yelekçi, R. Yu, and B. Zhou (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press. In Press.

¹⁰ <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/press-release/cut-global-emissions-76-percent-every-year-next-decade-meet-15degc>

¹¹ <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/cop24-special-report-health-climate-change>

¹² <https://newclimateeconomy.report/>

RESOLVED, that congregants, rostered leaders, and bishops be encouraged to further educate themselves to the urgency of the climate emergency both locally and globally as well as to the local and global opportunities a just transition will create; and be it further

RESOLVED, that rostered leaders and bishops be encouraged to lift up loving our neighbor in response to the climate emergency through their preaching or other liturgical expression at least once a month; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Synod and ELCA Churchwide Organization will encourage and cooperate with Lutherans Restoring Creation and other faith-based and secular organizations that share our commitment to the protection and restoration of the natural world while doing justice for all.¹³

Submitted by:

Jane Affonso, Co-chair, Green Faith Team, First Lutheran Church and School, Torrance
Pastor Peg Schultz-Akerson, Co-chair, Green Faith Team, Lutheran Church of the Master, Los Angeles
Pastor Steve Herder, Ascension Lutheran Church, Thousand Oaks
Pastor Marsha Harris, Central Lutheran Church, Van Nuys
Pastor Scott Bartlett, Bethel Lutheran Church, Los Angeles
Dixie Hanson, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Thousand Oaks
Dr. Carole Francis-Swayze, St. Stephen's of the Valley Lutheran Church, Palmdale
Robert McDuff, Central Lutheran Church, Van Nuys
Deacon Martha Santrizos, Trinity Lutheran Church, Santa Barbara
Pastor Lisa E. Dahill, California Lutheran University, Thousand Oaks
Pastor Caleb Crainer, St. Andrews Lutheran Church, Los Angeles
Pastor Erik Goehner, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Thousand Oaks
Pastor Sharon Mead Ruff Richter, Trinity Lutheran Church, Pasadena
Gordon Henry, Mount Cross Lutheran Church, Camarillo, CA
Pastor Scott Fritz, Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, Long Beach
Sharon Heck, St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Hacienda Heights
John Halbert, Hope Lutheran Church, Hollywood
Ron Nelson, Christ Lutheran Church, Long Beach

¹³ For suggested organizations to connect with in doing this work please visit:
<https://lutheransrestoringcreation.org/actions-for-a-just-transition-to-a-healthier-climate-for-all/>

Note: This Memorial was submitted to Reference & Counsel, within the deadline for submission, for consideration at the cancelled 2020 SWCA Synod Assembly. The authors have requested that it be considered by the 2022 Assembly. The text below is as submitted in 2020. (sh)

RESOLUTION
2020 SYNOD ASSEMBLY
SOUTHWEST CALIFORNIA SYNOD AND PACIFICA SYNOD

WHEREAS the word “evangelical” appears in the name of our denomination (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: ELCA) and our primary worship book (Evangelical Lutheran Worship: ELW), and

WHEREAS the constituting members of the ELCA and the Commission for a New Lutheran Church which led into the ELCA’s formation held to the historic view and value of the word “evangelical” as meaning “pertaining to the Gospel,” and

WHEREAS the word “evangelical” was hoped to be maintained in its historic usage and sense at the time of the ELCA’s formation, and

WHEREAS the word “evangelical” has become culturally synonymous in the U.S. with a religious expression and belief that is not compatible with the ELCA, and

WHEREAS the word “evangelical” in the U.S. now culturally refers to fundamentalist Christianity including many forms of exclusion which we find to be contrary to the “evangel” (gospel) including the ordination of women and LGBTQ persons, and

WHEREAS the word “evangelical” is now representative of a narrow swath of conservative Christian denominations and sects rather than a broad notion of being Gospel-centric and inclusive of all persons, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the word “evangelical” be discontinued in use and stricken from the name of our denomination and future books of worship, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that ELCA Church Council determine the nature of the transition in the use of the word “evangelical” in our denominational title leading up to the 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Southwest California and Pacifica Synods memorialize the ELCA 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to discontinue the use the use of the word “evangelical” in our denomination name and to adopt a new name for the denomination which more faithfully reflects its identity in the U.S.

Respectfully submitted by:

Pastor Keith Banwart, St. Matthew’s, Glendale/Burbank
Pastor James Bessey, St. Timothy, Lakewood
Pastor James Boline, St. Paul’s, Santa Monica
Pastor Joseph Castenada Carrera, AdoreLA and Hollywood, Hollywood
Pastor Nancy Hamm, Christ, Downey
Deacon Jamie Hovland (Ret.), Mt. Olive, Santa Monica
Pastor Bill Hurst, First, Torrance
Pastor Jonathan Hemphill, Another Level & Ascension, Los Angeles
Pastor Karen Marohn, King of Kings, Oceanside
Deacon Agnes S. McClain (Ret.), St. Paul’s, Santa Monica

Pastor Eric Shafer, Mt. Olive, Santa Monica
Pastor Nancy Switzler, Church of Our Redeemer, Oxnard
Pastor James Proper (Ret.), Our Saviour's, Long Beach