

Resolutions

RESOLUTION TO BECOME “GREEN CONGREGATIONS”

WHEREAS, God’s first commandments to humanity are that we care for and take care of God’s good creation (Gen. 1:28 & 2:15); and

WHEREAS, Jesus came to bring salvation to the entire cosmos (John 3:16-17); and

WHEREAS, the Church, as the body of Christ in the world, is charged with calling the world to repentance and ushering in the kingdom of God; and

WHEREAS, “the whole creation is groaning” due to the abuse and misuse of God’s good creation by humanity;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the congregations of the Northern Illinois Synod be encouraged to become “green congregations” by forming a Green Team in the congregation that will:

1. Evaluate the building and grounds of the congregation and take a minimum of two steps each year to help reduce the congregation’s negative impact upon the environment,
2. Educate and encourage its membership on the ways in which they can help care for God’s creation in their everyday lives by living simply and walking lightly on the earth, and
3. Communicate with and respond to the work of the Northern Illinois Synod Green Team.

Submitted by: Synod Green Team

Contact Person: Pastor Don Knowles or Pastor Jeff Schlesinger

Date Received: April 10, 2008

Action of the Resolution Committee

Date of Action: April 25, 2008

Action Taken: Recommend Adoption

RESOLUTION TO BECOME A "GREEN SYNOD"

WHEREAS, God's first commandments to humanity are that we care for and take care of God's good creation (Gen. 1:28 & 2:15); and

WHEREAS, Jesus came to bring salvation to the entire cosmos (John 3:16-17); and

WHEREAS, the Church, as the body of Christ in the world, is charged with calling the world to repentance and ushering in the kingdom of God; and

WHEREAS, "the whole creation is groaning" due to the abuse and misuse of God's good creation by humanity;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Northern Illinois Synod become a "green synod" by taking the following steps:

1. Instituting all possible changes to improve energy efficiency in the synod office and other properties owned and/or operated by the synod, including but not limited to:
 - a. Performing a "green" audit (as per Green Synod Model proposed by Dr. David Rhoads, LSTC) that will make short and long term recommendations to lessen the carbon footprint on the earth,
 - b. Changing incandescent light bulbs to energy efficient compact fluorescent bulbs,
 - c. Exploring and utilizing alternate, more environmentally friendly means of producing electricity and heat, and
 - d. Replacing as necessary windows, doors, insulation, and other structural aspects of the property that may result in loss of energy.
2. Being persistent about the reduction and recycling of disposable resources in the synod office(s) such as paper, ink cartridges, plastic, Styrofoam, etc.; and
3. Taking all possible steps to make all synod sponsored events more environmentally friendly by things such as:
 - a. Reducing paper use by utilizing projection where practical and encouraging participants to use electronic media such as laptops, PDAs, etc., and
 - b. Insisting that meals be served in a manner that reduces waste by things such as:
 - i. Serving buffet style when possible so people only take what they will eat,
 - ii. Insisting on the use of paper or washable cups and plates instead of plastic or Styrofoam,
 - iii. Requiring that all recyclable waste be divided out and recycled properly.
 - c. Encouraging, expecting and enabling participants to carpool to events; and
4. Replacing synod owned vehicles with those that are the most environmentally friendly available (currently hybrid vehicles); and
5. Providing necessary support and resources so that the Northern Illinois Synod Green Team can continue its work to help the synod, its congregations and agencies to become green; and
6. Identifying a symbol that expresses and promotes our care for creation that will be used whenever green steps are taken; and
7. Instituting other strategies that may emerge as science and technology continue to explore means of helping preserve and regenerate the environment.

Submitted by: Synod Green Team

Contact Person: Pastor Don Knowles or Pastor Jeff Schlesinger

Date Received: April 10, 2008

Action of the Resolution Committee

Date of Action: April 25, 2008

Action Taken: Recommend Adoption

GOOD SHEPHERD/LSSI SUNDAY RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the gospel of Jesus Christ compels the church to be active in the world as an incarnate expression of God's commitment to God's beloved creation; and

WHEREAS, we believe it is God's will, testified to in the Old Testament prophetic tradition and incarnated in the life and ministry of Jesus, that all people should experience wholeness of body, mind and spirit; and

WHEREAS, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) has served people in need in Illinois for more than one hundred and forty years and continues to serve people in need regardless of race, creed, ethnicity, etc.; and

WHEREAS, LSSI is the only statewide ELCA social ministry organization in Illinois; and

WHEREAS, LSSI like most other human care provider organizations in Illinois, has suffered from chronic underfunding of state-funded services;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the 2008 Assembly of the Northern Illinois Synod, that the fourth Sunday of Easter be designated as Good Shepherd/LSSI Sunday in every congregation in this synod beginning in 2009 and that congregations are encouraged to make use of resources provided by LSSI to lift up our common ministry through LSSI; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that members and friends of ELCA congregations in Illinois are encouraged to communicate to their elected officials their support for increased funding for human care services.

Submitted by: Northern Illinois Synod Council

Date Received: April 3, 2008

Action of the Resolution Committee

Date of Action: April 25, 2008

Action Taken: Recommend Adoption

RESOLUTION TO INCREASE HUNGER APPEAL GIVING

WHEREAS, 38% of the congregations of the Northern Illinois Synod gave more to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America World Hunger Appeal in 2007 than in 2006; and

WHEREAS, the Northern Illinois Synod hunger giving total for 2007 was the highest in the nearly thirty year history of the ELCA World Hunger Appeal; and

WHEREAS, 38% of the congregations of the Northern Illinois Synod gave less in 2007 than in 2006 and 24% were recorded by the Synod as giving nothing to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal in 2007; and

WHEREAS, the rising cost of food world-wide has already caused increased hunger and violence in several countries; and

WHEREAS, water scarcity and pollution in world water supplies threaten to increase beyond the current total of more than one billion people around the globe who lack access to safe drinking water and sanitation services;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that every congregation in the Northern Illinois Synod be challenged to increase its commitment to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal by:

1. Setting a goal for 2008 to increase yearly giving to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal;
2. Remitting ELCA World Hunger Appeal donations through the Northern Illinois Synod office to receive proper credit;
3. Considering a partnership with other congregations who are sponsoring Foods Resource Bank projects in our synod; and
4. Educating congregation members about the work of the ELCA World Hunger Appeal, its contribution to Lutheran World Relief and Lutheran World Federation projects, and the growing crises in food and water supplies.

Submitted by: Northern Illinois Synod World Hunger Subcommittee

Contact person: Pastor Richard Meier or Ms. DiAnne Beynon

Date Received: April 19, 2008

Action of the Resolution Committee

Date of Action: April 25, 2008

Action Taken: Recommend Adoption

CALL FOR MORAL DELIBERATION

WHEREAS, the gospel declares, "Blessed are the peacemakers" (Matthew 5:9), calls us to repent, and challenges us, "Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed" (Romans 12:2); and

WHEREAS, the biblical prophets call us in each generation to speak the truth in love to the powers and principalities of our time, for God says to us, "I have called you and given you power to see that justice is done on earth" (Isaiah 42:6); and

WHEREAS, "Christianity stands or falls with its revolutionary protest against violence, arbitrariness and pride of power and with its plea for the weak. Christians are doing too little to make these points clear rather than too much. Christendom adjusts itself far too easily to the worship of power. Christians should give more offense; shock the world far more than they are doing now. Christians should take a stronger stand in favor of the weak rather than considering first the possible right of the strong"

(Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Sermon on II Corinthians 12:9); and

WHEREAS, Bonhoeffer also instructs us that "The followers of Christ have been called to peace.... And they must not only have peace but make it.... to renounce hatred and wrong.... and in so doing overcome evil with good, and establish the peace of God in the midst of a world of war and hate" (The Cost of Discipleship); and

WHEREAS, the ELCA social statement For Peace in God's World reminds us that "as a community of moral deliberation, the Church is a setting of freedom and respect where believers of different perspectives may learn from one another;" and also that "the church is a disturbing presence when it refuses to be silent and instead speaks the truth... when it names and resists idols that lead to false security, injustice, and war, and calls for repentance" (page 5); and

WHEREAS, the purpose of this resolution is to enhance and forward the mission of the church and synod by fostering moral deliberation and encouraging responsible action as individuals and as a "Public Church;"

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Northern Illinois Synod in Assembly encourages its members, congregations, clusters, and other groupings to enter into moral deliberation and discussion concerning our nation's foreign and military policy, making use of resources and activities from Kairos: A Time to Speak, A Time to Act*, the ELCA's Equipping for Peacemaking, Lutheran Peace Fellowship, and other sources; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that individuals, congregations, clusters, and other groupings be encouraged to prayerfully consider becoming involved in studying, developing, and signing Kairos: A Time to Speak, a Time to Act* as one step in being a "Public Church," following God's command to be peacemakers.

* Kairos: A Time to Speak, a Time to Act - attached

Submitted by: Congregation Council of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Rockford, IL

Contact Person: Pastor Kenn Storck

Date Received: April 5, 2008

Action of the Resolution Committee

Date of Action: April 25, 2008

Action Taken: Recommend Adoption

Kairos: A Time to Speak, A Time to Act

Kairos Statement

Inspired by the courageous faithfulness of the confessing church in Nazi Germany, South Africa, Latin America, and elsewhere, we recognize the need for a similar confession in our time.

We challenge ourselves and our Church to ask if the situation in which we find ourselves is a Kairos moment: a situation so grave, so fraught with radical consequences that fence-sitting is not possible. We ask: Is this a time when it is necessary to be prophetic in order to rightly preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments? Is this a time when our confession of Jesus Christ calls into question the ideology that shapes our national life and challenges us to work for change?

We hope that this statement will encourage discussion and debate about the state of our world, examination of the effects of U.S. policies, and moral deliberation by people throughout the Church so that together we may discern the will of God for this time and place, and act faithfully and boldly.

The Church is called to reject idolatry, name evil, and seek the reign of God. We seek to listen to and proclaim the gospel in the midst of the challenges and temptations in our public life. In this process our discipleship deepens and the Church is renewed. We seek change in the hearts and actions of Christians, and also in public policies and processes (the latter are noted with a ■)

Therefore as members of the Church in the United States we believe we must speak with a prophetic voice. We must break our silence, end our complicity, and proclaim a common word on behalf of the common good, the good news of Jesus Christ and God's vision of Shalom: justice, peace, community, wholeness.

"Blessed are the peacemakers." (Matthew 5:9 NRSV)

As Christians we are called to follow in the footsteps of Jesus who teaches us how to be in the world yet not of the world by seeking to love God with our whole heart, mind, soul and strength and our neighbor as ourselves.

The brutal attacks of September 11, 2001 galvanized us as a nation as we came together to mourn, find hope and respond. Yet in the wake of September 11 the U.S. administration chose a path based on fear and revenge, and squandered the compassion that brought us together at home and renewed our kinship with peoples abroad. As followers of Jesus we are compelled to choose another way.

■ U.S. foreign policies, including "preemptive" war, a perpetual "global war on terror," and acts of terror, have caused hatred and disdain to grow toward the United States and have made us less secure. Our government's unilateral approach to war has damaged our ability to work with other countries and has proved to be fraught with risk.

■ The U.S. military budget is enormous and is rapidly expanding while spending remains miniscule to address root causes of conflict, such as poverty, hunger, and education, or for spending on nonviolent responses to conflict, such as peacekeeping,

■ The functioning of our democracy has been endangered by governmental attempts to control information, to manipulate the media, and to silence critics and to play on fear. The public has been misled into sanctioning the misuse of power.

"But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." (Matthew 5:44 NRSV)

Jesus' teaching is clear and profound and calls humans to their noblest and best. We witness this teaching lived out in our age by such leaders as Dorothy Day, Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Jr., Cesar Chavez, and Desmond Tutu. Jesus and these contemporary leaders demonstrate for us God's way of peace and nonviolence and we assert that all Christians are called to this divine path.

■Peoples, nations, and religions have been named as "evil" allowing the rationalization of brutal treatment inflicted on "enemies" – including civilians.

■The Geneva Convention regarding the treatment of combatants has been abandoned and prisoners have been tortured.

"I, your God, have called you and given you power to see that justice is done on earth. Through you I will make a covenant with all peoples; through you I will bring light to the nations." (Isaiah 42:6 TEV) "Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it." (Psalm 34:14 and I Peter 3:11 NRSV)

We embrace servant discipleship: The cross of Jesus Christ calls us to give our allegiance to God ahead of nation, family, or church. We accept our Christian calling to love our neighbor as ourselves, and to pursue Shalom – in our community, our nation, and our world.

■Every person on earth deserves the basics of human life. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations Millennium Development Goals point the way for nations to collaborate in creating a future marked by global justice.

■U.S. policies isolate us from our neighbors and distance us from international collaboration for global justice. Our nation is using our superpower status to advance "national" interests while other countries struggle to meet the most basic needs of their people.

■The large and growing influence of money in political campaigns, and in legislative and regulatory processes, is threatening our democracy.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because God has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. God has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke 4:18-19 NRSV)

Just as Jesus boldly proclaimed his mission, the Church is called to follow confidently in his footsteps. We bring the good news of God's liberating love to the world and continue Jesus' work by serving and befriending those who are impoverished, held captive and are oppressed. We proclaim that through the compassionate eyes of God, this year, can be the year of Jubilee – the season of God's justice. This is good news for all people and all of creation.

■U.S. policies and the actions of some multinational corporations advance the comforts of some at the expense of the poor.

■Our government and many U.S. corporations refuse to cooperate with the vast majority of other nations in the healing of the environment, recklessly pursuing natural resources at the expense of sustainability, and abandoning international treaties like the Kyoto Accord.

"My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior." (Luke 1:46-47 NRSV)

The Church, like Mary, rejoices in God, our Savior. We rejoice knowing that the God of creation is a God of justice whose heart is committed to the poor. We believe, with Mary, that the God of history casts the mighty down from their thrones and uplifts the humble of heart and that God will fill the hungry with good things and will send the rich away empty. We confess our complacency and complicity in the times our nation has exercised its national power at the expense of our sisters and brothers at home and in other parts of the world.

"For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38-39 NRSV)

So let us move forward with great courage and claim our voices as Christians and as the Church in the U.S. Let us join together with other people of good will in nonviolent social movements that historically have been crucial means for bringing about lasting change. We will not let our fears outshine our faith. We will boldly proclaim to our communities, and to the powers and principalities, that God is love. With humility and the grace we have received, we will do whatever we can to embody the coming of God's way of

[The Kairos Statement, Stand of Confession, Discussion Material, & Resource Guides, are posted at: www.KairosAction.org.]

BOOK OF FAITH INITIATIVE

WHEREAS, all the baptized when they affirm their baptism promise “to hear the Word of God” and “to proclaim the good news of God in Christ

WHEREAS, all parents and sponsors covenant to place the Holy Scriptures in the hands of their children and nurture them in faith and prayer; and

WHEREAS, pastors at their ordination vow to be diligent in their study of the Holy Scriptures; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA has begun a Book of Faith Initiative inviting everyone to join the conversation, to make a commitment, and to become part of the initiative (see <http://www.elca.org/bookoffaith>);

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that we become a "Book of Faith" synod, committing ourselves to live in and from the Word of God in all our meetings, assemblies and events, so that as we regularly and increasingly hear, read, study, share and are engaged by God's Word, we lead by example in faithful service and holy living; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the bishop of our synod—who “as its pastor, shall be a teacher of the faith of this church and shall provide leadership for the life and witness of this church”—in coordination with the Synod Advocate, be affirmed in his leadership of this initiative personally and through collaborative programmatic work with congregations of the synod; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all voting members of this synod assembly covenant together to begin a regular practice of Bible study and prayer, gathering with others in their congregation and/or community to speak and hear the Word from one another; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we celebrate and continue to support and strengthen those places where Scripture is already taught and engaged, such as Women of the ELCA Bible studies, camping and campus ministries, Diakonia, congregation councils, Sunday school and other congregational groups; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we encourage all congregations to become “Book of Faith” congregations, which will find expression by

- exploring new opportunities for engaging the Bible,
- sending sufficient numbers of members to synod events for training as Bible study leaders, and
- including biblical study as an integral part of all meetings and groups,

in order to become more fluent in the first language of faith—the language of Scripture—that we might live into our calling as a people renewed, enlivened, empowered, and sent by the Word.

Submitted by: Northern Illinois Synod Council

Date Received: April 19, 2008

Action of the Resolution Committee

Date of Action: April 25, 2008

Action Taken: Recommend Adoption

SCRIPTURAL BASIS FOR RESOLUTIONS

WHEREAS, recent resolutions have been proposed to the ELCA, Northern Illinois Synod, that if passed, would clearly conflict with Holy Scripture as commonly found in the King James Version or New American Standard Bibles or other traditionally accepted Lutheran bibles; and

WHEREAS, resolutions, that are in conflict with Scripture, if passed, would likely result in personal conflict with Scripture and endorsement of sin; and

WHEREAS, unrepentant sin carries the wage of spiritual and eternal death; and

WHEREAS, the Lutheran Church was founded, in part, upon a principal commonly referred to as “Sola Scriptura” to prevent the establishment of non-scriptural tradition; and

WHEREAS, Scripture is the Word of God;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that all resolutions brought before this assembly be tested first for scriptural compatibility. This testing may be done as a normal part of the Resolutions Committee review. If a resolution passes review by the Resolutions Committee and is presented to the assembly, any voting member having knowledge that the resolution is in conflict with Scripture may move, supported by clear scriptural evidence, that the resolution be rejected. This resolution must be presented before any other resolutions. In the event this resolution is passed it should be read before each annual assembly and be noted in the Synod’s Resolution Writing program.

Submitted by: Congregation Council of Shepherd of the Hill Lutheran Church, Lockport, IL

Contact Person: Mr. Ken Franz, Congregational Council President

Date Received: March 21, 2008

Action of the Resolution Committee

Date of Action: April 25, 2008

Action Taken: Recommend Defeat