

ADOPTED by the Saint Paul Area Synod Assembly May 30, 2008

A Resolution to Amend Policies on the ELCA's Ministry Rosters

- WHEREAS, the ELCA has repeatedly welcomed gay and lesbian people into its life (including resolutions of the 1991, 1995, 1999, 2005, and 2007 Churchwide Assemblies); and
- WHEREAS, some congregations throughout the ELCA are faithfully and effectively served by qualified ministers who are in a committed same-gender relationship; and
- WHEREAS, in April 2009 (well before this synod's 2009 assembly), the ELCA Church Council will decide which recommendations concerning the ELCA's ministry rosters it will make to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly, and this synod desires to communicate its views concerning rostered ministry as the Church Council prepares its recommendations on the matter; and
- WHEREAS, a congregation that wishes to call as its minister an otherwise-qualified person in a committed same-gender partnership should be permitted to do so, while at the same time a congregation that does not wish to call such a minister cannot and should not be forced to do so; and
- WHEREAS, the document known as *Vision and Expectations*, the document known as *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline*, and the policy on reinstatement to the rosters of this church may be amended by the Church Council at the direction, by a simple-majority vote, of the Churchwide Assembly (see Preliminary Minutes of the 10th Churchwide Assembly, pages 64 and 80, explanations by Presiding Bishop Hanson and Secretary Almen); now, therefore, be it
- RESOLVED, that this synod, meeting in assembly, direct the Synod Council to submit a resolution to the ELCA Church Council to take the following actions regarding the ELCA's ministry rosters:

To direct the Committee on Appeals to develop an amendment to the document known as *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline* that removes provisions precluding "practicing homosexual persons" from the rosters of this church; and

To direct the Vocation and Education unit, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, to develop an amendment to the document known as *Vision and Expectations* that removes provisions requiring persons who are "homosexual in their self-understanding" to "abstain from homosexual sexual relationships;" and

To direct the Vocation and Education unit, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, to develop an amendment to the document known as *Vision and Expectations* that inserts the following: “Ministers in a same-gender partnership are expected to uphold the same standard as all ministers, namely, to live in fidelity to their partner within a relationship that is mutual, chaste, and faithful;” and

To direct the Vocation and Education unit, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, to develop an amendment to the policy on reinstatement to the rosters of this church that permits the reinstatement of persons who have resigned or been removed solely because they were in a same-gender relationship, even though that relationship was mutual, chaste, faithful, and committed, without the requirement of five years off the roster;

To direct the Church Council to take the steps necessary to amend *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline, Vision and Expectations*, and the policy on reinstatement to the rosters of this church in conformity with the amendments developed (pursuant to the preceding directions) by the Committee on Appeals and the Vocation and Education unit.