

A Resolution Encouraging Same-Gender Couples' Promises of Lifelong Fidelity

WHEREAS, we discern the Holy Spirit's work in the 2005 Churchwide Assembly as (1) affirming that the current disagreements on homosexuality are between people of faith seeking to live in faithful obedience to the command of Jesus Christ and the call of the Holy Spirit, (2) leading the church to live together amidst our disagreements, (3) inviting continued communication, openness and understanding among all members of this church; and

WHEREAS, the 2005 Churchwide Assembly affirmed its trust for pastors and congregations as they discern ways to provide faithful pastoral care for all to whom they minister, including persons in a committed same-gender partnership; and

WHEREAS, many congregations in the ELCA count as valued members and leaders baptized persons who are in a committed same-gender relationship and who desire to make public their promises of love and fidelity, seek to invite God into their relationship to help in the fulfillment of their promises, and long for the blessing of their church communities and the fullness of the prayers, encouragement and consolation that these communities of faith provide; and

WHEREAS, a growing number of states have legally defined and recognized relationships between two persons of the same gender and many in this church's congregations are entering into such relationships; and

WHEREAS, many congregations in the ELCA yearn to provide pastoral care for the same-gender couples among their members by witnessing and supporting their promises of lifelong fidelity and by offering support in the name of God as they fulfill these promises; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that this synod, meeting in assembly, encourage pastors and congregations to provide pastoral care to same-gender couples by witnessing or affirming their promises of lifelong fidelity, and by invoking God's help and offering the congregation's support as they fulfill these promises; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this synod, meeting in assembly, direct the Synod Council to submit a resolution to the ELCA Church Council to direct the ELCA Worship and Liturgical Resources section to develop resources to assist pastors and congregations who wish to provide pastoral care to same-gender couples by witnessing or affirming their promises of lifelong fidelity, and by invoking God's guidance and offering the congregation's support as they fulfill these promises.