

Pastoral Care and Support for Lutheran-Catholic Families

- 1 WHEREAS, in 1995, ELCA Bishops Lowell Erdahl and David Olson, together with Roman Catholic
2 Archbishop John Roach, promulgated the “Guide for a Lutheran-Catholic Marriage,” which
3 was a groundbreaking document in both pastoral care of families and Christian unity within
4 the greater church; and
- 5 WHEREAS, in subsequent years, Catholic bishops throughout the world built upon the principles of this
6 document in promulgating policies which promoted the pastoral care of such families; and
- 7 WHEREAS, the pastoral care needs of Lutheran-Catholic families, to a great extent, must be discussed prior
8 to times of crisis; and
- 9 WHEREAS, in 2006, speaking in a Lutheran church, Pope Benedict called upon all Christian faith
10 communities to promote Christian unity by building upon the “practical laboratory of unity”
11 which such families represent; and
- 12 WHEREAS, in 2008, Roman Catholic Cardinal Walter Kasper called upon both Catholics and Protestants
13 to draw upon the power of the faith expressed in the writings and hymns of Martin Luther; and
- 14 WHEREAS, in 2008, Pope Benedict affirmed the “truth” of Luther’s doctrine of justification by faith alone;
15 and
- 16 WHEREAS, by the confluence of these events, we as Lutherans of the Saint Paul Area Synod are in a
17 uniquely strong position to continue the dialog begun by our bishops in 1995, to continue the
18 attention to pastoral care expressed by Catholic bishops in subsequent years, and to heed Pope
19 Benedict’s call to take advantage of the “practical laboratories of unity” within our midst;
20 therefore be it
- 21 RESOLVED, that the Bishop of the Saint Paul Area Synod initiate further dialog with the Roman Catholic
22 Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, continuing that begun with the 1995 guide, in
23 particular to focus on how our faith traditions can most effectively provide pastoral care to
24 Lutheran-Catholic families, including a discussion of sharing of the Eucharist when appropriate
25 in exceptional circumstances; and be it further
- 26 RESOLVED, that congregations and clergy of the Saint Paul Area Synod look for opportunities for dialog
27 and joint efforts to provide pastoral care and support to families from separate Christian
28 traditions, building on the Christian unity already present within these families.

Adopted by the South Central Conference at Conference Assemblies, February 7, 2009, at Incarnation Lutheran Church, Shoreview.

The reference and counsel committee recommends adoption.

Note: Background material submitted with this resolution is posted at www.spas-elca.org.