

Resolution to Amend the ELCA Constitution to Include Creation Care

WHEREAS baptism is a requirement for membership in the ELCA (C8.01. of the *Model Constitution*); and

WHEREAS our baptismal liturgy, as printed in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, states that one of the things the baptized do is “care for others and the world God made”; and

WHEREAS the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America clearly states in the *Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice* social statement is that “humans, in service to God, have special roles on behalf of the whole of creation. Made in the image of God, we are called to care for the earth as God cares for the earth”; and

WHEREAS the social statement goes on to say, “As members of this church, we commit ourselves to personal life styles that contribute to the health of the environment”; and

WHEREAS the social statement goes on to say, “Each congregation should see itself as a center for exploring scriptural and theological foundation for caring for creation. [...] As congregations and other expressions of this church, we will seek to incorporate the principles of sufficiency and sustainability in our life. We will advocate the environmental tithe, and we will take other measures that work to limit consumption and reduce wastes. We will, in our budgeting and investment of church funds, demonstrate our care for creation. We will undertake environmental audits and follow through with checkups to ensure our continued commitment.”; and

WHEREAS the social statement goes on to quote an offertory prayer from the *Lutheran Book of Worship*, which states, “We [...] dedicate our lives to the care and redemption of all that you have made, for the sake of him who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord”; and

WHEREAS the new *Climate Care* social message reaffirms our priority as a church in caring for the world and all that God has made; and

WHEREAS, despite these strong statements about the importance of caring for creation, the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* includes very limited language about creation care, only mentioned in 4.03.b. (this church will “equip all members [...] to be stewards of the earth, their lives, and the Gospel”), in 7.51. (ministers of Word and Service will “exemplify the life of Christ-like service to all persons and creation”), and possibly in 7.61.02.b. (ministers of Word and Service will attend to “the suffering places in God’s world”, though all other references to suffering are explicitly to “human suffering”), but otherwise unmentioned in the purposes of this church and its expressions, ministers, and members; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly direct the Greater Milwaukee Synod Council to request the Church Council and the Office of the Secretary to develop amendments to the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* to be presented at the 2025 Churchwide Assembly that add the care of creation to the purposes of this church; and

RESOLVED, that these amendments should include adding the purpose of caring for creation to 4.02., 4.03., 7.31.02., 7.61.02., 9.41., 11.21., 16.12.D21., S6.02., S14.12., S14.32., C4.02., C4.03., C9.03., and C9.23., as well as any other applicable places within the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*; and

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod direct the Greater Milwaukee Synod Council to request the Church Council and the Office of the Secretary add a new provision on “the purpose of membership” to “Chapter C8. Members” or amend C8.04. (the privileges and duties of members) that includes the visions laid out in 4.03.b. (how this church will fulfill its purpose through its members) and in the liturgies of baptism and affirmation of baptism as printed in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*.