

Resolution on Synod Guidelines for Continuing Education

WHEREAS, The ELCA has a strong commitment to the continuing education of their rostered leaders; and

WHEREAS, Continuing education guidelines were set at the 1997 ELCA Churchwide Assembly that included expectations for rostered church workers to have 50 contact hours of intentional continuing education annually, as well as expectations for workers' congregations and agencies to make a commitment to spend \$700.00 to \$1,000.00 annually per worker for continuing education by the year 2000 with the worker being expected to contribute an additional \$300.00 (elca.org/News-and-Events/2931); and

WHEREAS, The monetary commitments in these guidelines have not changed in 25 years, and today the ELCA document "Definition of Compensation, Benefits, and Responsibilities for Ministers of Word and Sacrament Under Call", as well as the same document for Ministers of Word and Service, still states, "Continuing education (\$1,000.00 recommended; minimum \$700.00 from calling source)"; and

WHEREAS, The Greater Milwaukee Synod, in its compensation guidelines, also has not increased the amount congregations set aside for continuing education in 25 years, stating "the recommended congregation's share is \$700 or more per year; the pastor contributes \$300.00 on their own each year"; and

WHEREAS, According to the Inflation Calculator at the Bureau of Labor Statistics (data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl), \$700.00 when this resolution passed (August 1997) is comparable to \$1,296.01 today (November 2022), and \$1,000.00 today has the same buying power as \$540.12 did when this resolution was passed; and

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church gives clearer guidelines for continuing education in *The Book of Discipline* #350, where it says, "Clergy shall engage in continuing education for ministry, professional development, and spiritual formation and growth [...]. This shall include carefully developed personal programs of study augmented periodically by involvement in organized educational and spiritual growth activities";

WHEREAS, The Wisconsin Conference UCC gives clearer guidelines in their compensation guidelines, where it says, "The amount that is budgeted should cover [...] tuition, travel, housing, books and meals"; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly direct the Greater Milwaukee Synod Council to increase the recommended financial commitment for continuing education when preparing the 2024 compensation guidelines; and

RESOLVED, That the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly direct the Greater Milwaukee Synod Council to establish clearer guidelines for continuing education, which *may* include such things like:

- compensation and number of contact hours expected for full-time vs. part-time,
- what all can be covered by continuing education compensation (e.g. travel, housing, and meals),
- advice on establishing a multi-year continuing ed plan by ministers and their calling bodies,
- broad topic expectations over a multi-year period, such as anti-racism and boundary training,
- expectations for growing each year in more than one area of ministry, such that all continuing education is not only for preaching, but covers other topics such as evangelism or pastoral care,
- the extent to which independent study (e.g. books and podcasts) count toward hours each year, and
- whether spiritual growth (e.g. a monastic retreat) can count toward continuing education.