

2021 Resolution 1

Resolution on Authentic Diversity and Inclusion in Synod Life

Submitted by the Church Council of Trinity Lutheran Church, West Bend

WHEREAS past actions of the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly have committed this synod to being a Reconciling In Christ (RIC) Synod (1991 Resolution 2, [1998 Resolutions 4 and 5], 2018 Resolution 1) and a synod committed to anti-racism (1998 Resolution 3, 2003 Resolution 2); and

WHEREAS these commitments were made by the synod as a whole, making everyone responsible for living into these commitments more fully; and

WHEREAS it requires the mutual work of congregations, the Synod Council, Synod staff, and Synod ministries to turn these commitments into action; and

WHEREAS these commitments only have meaning if they lead to concrete changes in our life together; and

WHEREAS the synod has been blessed with the gifts of many people of color and members of the LGBTQIA+ community, and yet people in these communities have not always had their gifts affirmed by being welcomed into the ministry we share; and

WHEREAS there is a need for greater structural accountability throughout the ELCA regarding authentic diversity and inclusion; and

WHEREAS the ELCA's Authentic Diversity Task Force states that "the church must embody Christ's mission through the lens of a crucified Jesus, who gathers all to himself in one family devoid of hierarchies and unhealthy power structures," and

WHEREAS "the manifold communities of the ELCA are called to exhibit *authentic diversity*—demographically matching the ethnic and racial composition of their respective contexts, as stated in the ELCA constitution (5.01.A16.), [and] they are likewise called to recognize that race and ethnicity intersect with other marginalizing traits (including gender, sexuality, and ability) and that people in these groups are also vulnerable" (*HOW STRATEGIC AND AUTHENTIC IS OUR DIVERSITY: A Call for Confession, Reflection, and Healing Action*); **therefore, be it**

RESOLVED, That the Greater Milwaukee Synod Council and Synod Staff continue the work of 2018 Resolution 1, to "journey with willing congregations who are not yet RIC," and "annually identify congregations who are not RIC in order to invite these congregations into recurring conversations with Synod staff about their congregational identity and the Synod's RIC identity;" and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Synod Staff should encourage all congregations to learn about their communities and neighborhoods and to develop and implement outreach plans geared toward increasing authentic diversity representative of race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic class, and ability; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Synod Council form a Task Force to consider changes to the synod’s life (i.e., changes in election procedure, representation on synod teams, call processes) and to explore further ways to hold educational events and encourage participation in leadership development around issues of inclusion and justice in areas of race, gender identity, and sexual identity for all leaders, both rostered and lay; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this Task Force develop a plan to measure and achieve progress towards Authentic Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, which would allow for structural accountability; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a report of progress be made by the Synod Council at the 2024 Synod Assembly.

*Note: In the ELCA Document, “**HOW STRATEGIC AND AUTHENTIC IS OUR DIVERSITY: A Call for Confession, Reflection, and Healing Action,**” The Churchwide organization is called to develop an assessment process, to be utilized across all three expressions of the ELCA, that records, maps, and evaluates the efforts of diversity initiatives, including the creation of a Synod Accountability Report Card Toward Authentic Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.*