

RESOLUTION #1 – Calling the Church to Speak and Act to Prevent Bullying, Harassment and Related Violence *(Submitted by RIC Ministry Team and Anti-racism Team)*

WHEREAS “If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.” (1 Cor. 12:26); and

WHEREAS in the ELCA Social Statement on Education (2007) we declared, “*The ELCA expects communities of learning and teaching to be safe places. We recognize that school safety is an issue for all students, staff and teachers. Unfortunately, incidents of bullying, intimidation and other forms of violence are not unusual. We affirm that personal safety and security are essential for optimal teaching and learning*”; and

WHEREAS research indicated children with disabilities or special needs are at a higher risk of being bullied than others (Rigby, K., 2002 *New Perspective on Bullying* .London. Jessica Kingsley Publications); and has concluded that *Bullying around issues of sexual orientation, non-conforming gender behaviors, and dress was the most common form of bullying, second only to issues of appearance (e.g. body size and disability)*”. (The National School Climate Survey, conducted in 2005; and

WHEREAS the ELCA Social Statement on Sexuality: Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust (2009) we declared, “*Likewise, it will attend to the particular needs of children and the families of those with actual or perceived differences in sexual orientation or gender identity because they are especially vulnerable to verbal, physical, emotional, spiritual, psychological, and sexual abuse,*”; and

WHEREAS increased media attention has made us acutely aware of tragic consequences (including youth suicide) if steps are not taken to prevent bullying, harassment, and other related forms of violence; and

WHEREAS the voice of the church addressing the intersection of race, economic status, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, and physical ability is a powerful witness to the healing and life affirming Gospel promise;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Greater Milwaukee Synod encourages new partnerships among our congregations, the synods, the Churchwide Organization, outdoor ministries, campus ministries, Lutheran School Associations, Lutherans Concerned/North America, Lutheran Social Services organizations, public schools, counseling centers and other governmental organizations in order to support and offer preventative programs addressing bullying, harassment, and other related violence, especially with higher risk populations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that these partnerships be encouraged to create or join with existing preventative programs, which:

- a. Utilize positive, inclusive, empowering and developmentally appropriate materials, b. Raise participant’s awareness about the issue, c. Focus on prevention, d. Seek to change bystander behavior into ally behavior,
- e. Create partnerships between youth and adults; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that these partnerships seek funding for these efforts from a combination of existing funds and new funding sources not otherwise accessible individually such as foundation grants, synod and other Lutheran organizational grants (for example: Thrivent, Wheat Ridge Ministries, Women of the ELCA, etc...), private and governmental funding sources, and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Greater Milwaukee Synod memorialize the 2011 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to encourage, support and publicize new partnerships in ministry that emerge in our church addressing the prevention of bullying, harassment, and related forms of violence, especially with higher risk populations.