

Resolution 4 – 2019 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly Resolution Encouraging Parental Leave Policies in Congregations

WHEREAS, all Christians are called to care for their family members and fellow members of the Body of Christ; and

WHEREAS, the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church name care for one's family as a Christian's first vow, with precedence over any monastic or clerical vows (Apology of the Augsburg Confession, XXVII:67-68); and

WHEREAS, the current Greater Milwaukee Synod Compensation Guidelines state, "Congregations are expected to provide for a paid parental leave of up to six weeks for the birth, adoption or pre-adoption placement of a child with full, salary, housing and benefits"; and

WHEREAS, The ELCA document, "Definition of Compensation, Benefits, and Responsibilities for Ministers of Word and Sacrament Under Call" that is to be completed when a new call is issued states, under D. Agreement, item 6.

"Maternity/Paternity or Adoptive leave of ___ weeks with full salary, housing, and benefits (Recommended 6 weeks; 4 weeks minimum)" and

WHEREAS, The National Partnership on Women and Families reports that "parental leave allows new parents time to care for their children--giving them the best chance at a healthy start on life"; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA draft of the "Social Statement on Faith, Sexism, and Justice" suggests: "Finally, this church needs to offer greater support for women's ministry and leadership in policies related to pregnancy, parental leave, and breastfeeding. Improved arrangements for ELCA rostered leaders and for employees of ELCA-related organizations and institutions should support these leaders and demonstrate this church's commitment to family"; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary for all rostered ministers of the ELCA to have the support they need to respond to God's call to serve the church; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the congregations of the Greater Milwaukee Synod are encouraged to adopt policies providing eight weeks of parental leave with full salary, housing, and benefits for ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service, such leave to be available in connection with the birth, adoption, or pre-adoption placement of a child and such leave to be available without regard to the sexual orientation or marital status of the rostered ministers eligible for the leave and without regard to the cognitive or physical abilities of a child being welcomed; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod staff be intentional in talking with call committees, congregation councils, and Mission Exploration Teams to encourage congregations in the Greater Milwaukee Synod to adopt parental leave policies in place prior to issuing any call(s); and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod staff shall work with the synod attorney, in consultation with rostered ministers and lay leaders, to develop a model policy for parental leave that, upon approval by the synod council, will be made available to congregations in the synod for consideration and adoption.

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Submitted by Milwaukee Clusters 1 and 2

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