

A Resolution on Living Into the Unity of the Body of Christ

WHEREAS Scripture witnesses to God's desire to embrace all people who seek to worship their creator, even those led to believe they surely would be separated from God's people;

"[T]hese I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. Thus says the Lord GOD, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, I will gather others to them besides those already gathered."
(Isaiah 56:7-8)

and

WHEREAS the body of Christ is one unified body with a diversity of members bound together by the Holy Spirit through baptism;

"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body-- Jews or Greeks, slaves or free-- and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many."
(1 Corinthians 12:12-14)

and

WHEREAS God has created the body of Christ as a diverse unity for mutual care and up building;

"that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it." (1 Corinthians 12:25-27)

and

WHEREAS Congregations are to teach the scriptures according to the Model Constitution

***C4.02.** To participate in God's mission, this congregation as a part of the Church shall:

e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.

***C4.03.** To fulfill these purposes, this congregation shall:

d. Teach the Word of God.

and

WHEREAS the ELCA is one church body organized in three expressions — congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, with each expression having its particular functions but all three together sharing a common mission of doing God's work in the world and proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ.¹ , and

¹ <https://www.elca.org/About/Churchwide>

WHEREAS there is ample space for a wide diversity of viewpoints among the unified members of the body of Christ as embodied in the three expressions of the ELCA; and

WHEREAS the social statements issued by the churchwide organization of the ELCA are non-binding teaching documents shared as such with other members of the body, and

WHEREAS Scripture cautions regarding divisions within the body;

“Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose.” (1 Corinthians 1:10)

therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the people and congregations of the SC Synod ELCA will enter into an intentional one year period of Bible study and discernment upon: (1) the nature of the body of Christ as revealed in Scripture and expressed in the world, (2) the nature of the three expressions of the ELCA, (3) the interrelationship between (1) and (2) for the purpose of doing God’s work in the world and proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ; and be it further

RESOLVED that the bishop’s office will to provide the conferences and congregations resources to help facilitate this intentional one year study, including opportunities for partnering and individuals to help lead study and discussion; and be it further

RESOLVED that SC Synod conference deans would work closely with the bishop’s office to foster communication, make the aforementioned resources available, and assist congregations with entering into the intentional one year period; and be it finally

RESOLVED that reflections upon these studies and conversations be shared at the 2024 SC Synod Assembly.

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By

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