

Resolution on Fulfilling Our Baptismal Call Through Truth, Unity, and Transparency in the South Carolina Synod

WHEREAS, the South Carolina Synod is part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), and Scripture calls us to “speak the truth in love” (Ephesians 4:15) and avoid bearing false witness (Exodus 20:16); and

WHEREAS, our baptismal promises call us to live among God’s faithful people, hear the word of God and share in the Lord’s supper, proclaim the good news of God in Christ, serve all people following the example of Jesus, and strive for justice and peace in all the earth; and

WHEREAS, congregations are the primary expression of the Church, serving as centers for proclaiming the Gospel, nurturing believers in faith, ministering to local communities, and providing the context for discerning pastoral leadership and embodying Christ’s mission; and

WHEREAS, the South Carolina Synod affirms that each congregation maintains the autonomy to call pastoral leaders who align with its ministry context, ensuring no congregation is compelled to accept a pastor it has not chosen; and

WHEREAS, transparent governance and proactive communication are essential for building mutual trust in the Body of Christ and fostering healthy congregations; and

WHEREAS, misinformation or fear-based rhetoric regarding the ELCA’s call process, property ownership, and commitment to welcome all people has been circulated—causing confusion and, in some cases, prompting congregations to consider disaffiliation or dissolution that create anger, sadness, and division; and

WHEREAS, we strive to be a synod united in Christ while recognizing our diversity in background, perspective, and practice—knowing that God’s people are called to unity, not uniformity; therefore, be it

Resolved, that the South Carolina Synod Assembly:

Reaffirms this synod’s commitment to fulfill our baptismal calling—abiding in Christ’s truth, seeking unity, and conducting ministry with transparency and integrity; and

Discourages the dissemination of misleading or divisive claims—particularly regarding the ELCA’s pastoral call process and property matters—and encourages all congregations and leaders to engage in open, respectful dialogue grounded in Christian love; and

Maintains that each congregation has the right and responsibility to call pastoral leaders in accordance with established ELCA processes and constitutional guidelines, trusting congregations to discern who is best suited to serve their community; and

Urges individuals and congregations encountering confusing or negative information about the ELCA or the South Carolina Synod’s governance to seek clarity from synodical and churchwide sources, using prayerful discernment and constructive conversation to resolve concerns; and

Invites all members of this synod to resist divisive narratives, stand firm in the unity we share in Christ, and continue working together to nurture one another in faith and prayer, proclaim Christ through word and deed, care for others and the world God made, and work for justice and peace; and

Encourages congregations to ensure that the rights and interests of every member are fully safeguarded throughout any discernment process, in accordance with the constitutions of the ELCA and this synod; and finally

Charges the South Carolina Synod Council, working together with the Office of the Bishop (or a designated body), to develop as soon as possible and proactively share accessible resources—through regular synod communications, educational events, and congregational networks—that equip members and leaders to understand and address misinformation, foster deeper unity, and strengthen our collective witness to the Gospel.

Adopted by South Carolina Synod Assembly, June 12-14, 2025