

Central States Synod 2022 Synod Assembly
June 9 – 11, 2022

Central States Synod Assembly 2022 - Resolutions Committee

Chair – Rev. Phil Vickers, First, Mission Hills, KS
Mark Conn, Western KS Conf., Emmanuel Lutheran, Stuttgart, KS
Ms. Connie Harris, Central, KS, Emmanuel, Hutchinson, KS
Mr. John Heerboth, Eastern MO Conf., Christ Lutheran, Webster Grove, MO
Rev. Emily McQuillan, Border Conference, OLFC
Rev. Tom Wehrman, Osage Conf., St. John, Pittsburg, KS
Staff Liaison – Rev. Dave Whetter

Motion Sheet - 2022 Central States Synod Assembly

MOTION SHEET for resolutions or amendments to resolutions

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2021 Central States Synod Assembly Actions

Number	Subject	Action
SA 21.01	<p>A Season of Global Awareness – Remembering our Companion Synods Designate Epiphany Season – Season of Global Awareness Designate Sunday, October 3, 2021 – Sunday of solidarity with Companion Synod in Russia Designate Sunday, April 24, 2022 – Sunday of solidarity with Companion Synod in Papua New Guinea</p>	<p>Adopted – work with Companion Synod Team for a communication plan</p>
SA 21.02	<p>Embracing the Earth Charter Encourage congregations to . . .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • become acquainted with the Earth Charter and its principles • consider joining the Earth Charter implementation initiative in our Synod • consider what actions to take to become better stewards of Creation • partner and communicate with the CSS Earth Charter Leadership Team, CSS Earth Charter congregations and ministry sites, and Lutherans Restoring Creation Mission Table to implement actions on behalf of God’s Creation, and present and future generations. 	<p>Adopted – work with Lutherans Restoring Creation and Earth Charter team to implement.</p>
SA 21.03	<p>Calling for a Social Statement on Child Protection Read and study the “Rationale for a Social Statement on Child Abuse and Child Protection” Developing effective and enforceable child protection and child maltreatment policies at every level. Encourage ELCA seminaries to provide education on recognizing and responding to child abuse, including appropriate spiritual care, and to provide continuing education on child maltreatment for pastors, deacons and other faith leaders in the field. Encourages its congregations to offer opportunities for dialogue and education on effective discipline of children including Bible studies on the Christian obligation to discipline children without the use of corporal punishment. The Central States Synod memorializes the ELCA to develop and adopt a social statement on Child Abuse and Child Protection.</p>	<p>Adopted – transmitted memorial to churchwide office. Partnered with SafeGatherings for background checks and training.</p>
SA 21.04	<p>Racial Justice Resolution for the Central States Synod Commit to being communities of repentance and transformation. Provide Resources for rostered leaders and SAMs to receive training every two years. Recognize Juneteenth, commemorating the emancipation of enslaved people in the United States. Empower the Racial Justice Team of the synod to provide resources to individual congregations.</p>	<p>Adopted – Work with Racial Justice team to share resources and arrange initial anti-racism training.</p>
SA 21.05	<p>Thanksgiving for Ministry Recognized and expressed appreciation for the ministry of deceased rostered leaders, leaders that have retired, congregations that have left the ELCA and congregations that closed.</p>	<p>Adopted – Assembly stood and gave applause. Chaplain offered a prayer</p>

Resolution SA 22.01 Limitations of Bishops by Gender

Though properly submitted this resolution will not be put to the vote as it has been deemed unconstitutional given that the synod does not have the authority to limit or dictate the election of rostered ministers to the office of Bishop.

At the last ELCA convention the model constitution was changed to limit the number of male gender members to 45% of the voting congregation and the number of female gender voting members to 45% of the congregation.

This change to constitutions of the 106 congregations of the Central States Synod will be required at the next annual meeting of the congregations. All other Synod congregations will also have to comply with the change to maintain model constitutions.

The ELCA has 65 Bishops and one presiding Bishop for a total of 66 Bishops.

This Resolution calls for the limitation of female gender Bishops to 45% of the total Bishops and the male gender Bishops to 45% of the total Bishops in the ELCA

Passing this resolution will put the Administration of the ELCA church in compliance with the changes in the model Constitutions required of all the individual congregations of the ELCA

Please present this Resolution action to the next annual meeting of the ELCA for a vote to change and comply.

Resolution submitted by Robert W. Kent

Resolution SA 22.02

Rules for Retired Pastors

Though properly submitted this resolution will not be put to the vote as it has been deemed unconstitutional given that the synod does not have the authority to override the rules for rostered ministers as dictated by the Rostered Leaders Manual of the ELCA.

This resolution calls for a change in the Synod rules of activity for Retired Rostered Ministers.

It is requested that the Synod allow Retired Rostered Ministers to preside over Funerals of formerly served congregants provided that:

The deceased congregant or his/her family requests the specific serves of the former Pastor.

Provided that:

The former Pastor ministered to the deceased congregant for five years or more at the congregant's Lutheran Church and

- 1) The funeral service takes place at a mortuary, cemetery, grave site, or other private or public place other than the ELCA church where the Pastor and Congregant attended.
- 2) The former Pastor agrees to perform the service.

The purpose of this change is to allow the deceased congregant and his/her family to have a meaningful last service in the Lutheran Faith with a Pastor that has an established relationship with the family without undermining the authority or responsibilities of the existing current Pastor of the former Pastor's Church.

Submitted by Robert W. Kent

Resolution SA 22.03

The Congregation Disposition of Assets Plan

Though properly submitted this resolution will not be put to the vote as it has been deemed unconstitutional given that the synod does not have the authority to dictate to congregations this or any other financial action.

This resolution calls for all 106 congregations in the Central States Synod to prepare a contingency “Disposition of Assets Plan” and submit it to the Synod within (12) twelve months.

The plan will define the congregation’s wishes regarding the disposition of its physical assets in the face of natural or financial disaster or other shortcomings making the continuation of the Church as an ongoing religious organization untenable.

This will allow the Synod to plan better for those Churches facing dwindling congregations or other causes which may result in the sudden title of the properties having to be assumed by the Synod.

It also will require the existing congregations to make better decisions as to their wishes for the disposition of their “Estate” just as every family does in planning for the succession of their family assets.

The recent demise of the Resurrection Church in St. Louis is an example of the synod suddenly being thrust into the position of taking title to a property 350 miles from the Synod offices with little advance notice.

Submitted by Robert W. Kent.

Resolution SA 22.04

A SEASON OF GLOBAL AWARENESS

Remembering our Companion Synods and ELCA ministries around the world

Because it is vitally important for the people, the congregations and the leadership of the Central States Synod to be aware that we are part of a world-wide community of faith that is called to bear one another's burdens, share our unique gifts with one another and both give and receive the unique witness to the gospel that is present in the church as it is embodied in the many different countries, cultures and languages around the world, the Companion Synod Team calls upon the Voting members of the Central States Synod Assembly to adopt the following resolution.

Be it resolved that the Epiphany Season be designated as a "Season of Global Awareness" for congregations within the Central States Synod and that congregations intentionally lift up the church around the world through prayer, song, educational events and in any way appropriate to the context of the congregation. The focus would be not only on our Companion Synods in Papua New Guinea and Russia, but also the Global Ministry we share in through the Global Mission Arm of the ELCA such as Missionary Sponsorship, Young Adults in Global Mission, and our support of Projects that promote the witness of the Gospel, works of compassion and Justice ministry around the world.

Be it also resolved that Sunday, October 2nd, 2022 shall be designated as the Sunday to remember, lift up and celebrate our companion church relationship with the "Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Urals, Siberia and Far East" (ELCUSFE) with a special focus on the Far Eastern Deanery. (This date was chosen because the first Sunday in October is widely observed by the churches in Russia as a harvest Sunday when they give thanks and celebrate the completion of the fall harvest).

Be it also resolved that Sunday, April 23rd, 2023 be designated as the Sunday to remember, lift up and celebrate our companion church relationship with the Kote District of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea (ELCPNG). We chose this Sunday because the Gospel lesson is Luke 24:13-35 which is the account of Jesus walking with two disheartened disciples on the road to Emmaus is a story that is a wonderful illustration of the way we are to walk with our companion Christians in Papua New Guinea and Russia that Jesus might be revealed through our interactions.

The Central States Synod Companion Synod Team will provide resources for mission education and worship for the Epiphany Season, and additionally, prayer requests, recent news and communications from our Companion Churches prior to the two Companion Synod Sundays to help us to "accompany one another" in our journey as followers, servants and witnesses to Jesus Christ in our respective parts of God's world.

The Companion Synod Team of the Central States Synod – ELCA

Andrew Beers

Rebecca Blocksome

Jon Brudvig

Jim Cooper

Emily Greble

Keith Holste

Penny Holste

Gary Kallansrud

Alex Lang

Daniel Lilienkamp

Doug Reed

Peggy Schaefer

Gary Teske

Resolution SA 22.05

Memorial Calling for the Just Transition from Greenhouse Gas Emissions

In this time of great concern for our fragile Mother Earth, we as the Lutherans Restoring Creation and the Racial Justice Team of the Central States Synod call the church to be mindful and to act against the destruction of our environment due to pollution created by humans that cause greenhouse gas emissions.

In scripture, we know that God created and blessed all of creation giving us the charge to protect and preserve the Earth (Genesis 1:28) that was affirmed in the 1993 ELCA Social Statement Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice. We are called in the Earth Charter adopted in the 2019 Churchwide Assembly that “the global environment with its finite resources is a common concern of all peoples. The protection of the Earth vitality, diversity, and beauty is a sacred trust.” Global warming has become a pressing issue for us all as we have experienced record-breaking wildfires, hurricanes, heat waves, droughts, ocean acidification, and species loss at an accelerated pace compared to previous generations. As a country, the United States has been one of the largest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions and we have a calling to do our part in changing our society to improve our environment.

Climate change is also leading to the increase in destruction of communities from natural disasters, the displacement of people around our globe, and amplified food scarcity as arable land decreases while populations grow. We acknowledge these burdens fall often on communities of poverty. This also disproportionately affects Black, Indigenous, Latino, and other communities of color within our country. We stand with our siblings in the Indigenous communities that continue to fight for the rights to preserve their lands and waters. We also advocate with our Black and Latino siblings whose communities due to racism have been segregated and forced into neighborhoods that are close to sites of pollution exposure through industrial zoning and hazardous waste facilities.

In conclusion, we are calling for a just transition away from fossil-fuel based economy that will lead to a world with better health, creation of new jobs from renewable energy sources, and promote clean air and water so that all of creation may thrive as God blessed. In this, we will create a safer and sustainable future for all people and for the future of humanity.

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Be it resolved that the Central States Synod to take the following actions:

- Memorialize the 2022 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA that they call upon the leadership of the United States to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50% by 2030, generate 100% of its power from clean renewable sources by 2035, and achieve net zero emissions by 2050.
- Encourage our Synod and congregations to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions in line with the above timetable
- Support investment and education of our Synod and congregations about the urgency of the climate crisis both locally and globally and equip our leaders to accomplish our goals to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.
- Develop partnerships and projects in our Synods and congregations that work with communities of color that are disproportionately impacted by the cost of pollution and climate change and advocate that churchwide, in consultation with the ELCA Advocacy Office, designate up to 40% of their mission funds designated for environmental concerns for this purpose.
- Seeking that congregations in our Synod include prayers for our environment and those effected at least once a month and that we designate one Sunday a year to increased awareness around our stewardship of creation.
- Encourage Congregations and households to decrease their fossil fuel consumption by 10% per year for each of the next three years.

This Resolution is being presented by the following members of Lutherans Restoring Creation and the Racial Justice Team:

Lutherans Restoring Creation

Cindy Gross
Kaylie Ines
Noni Strand
Melissa Woeppel

Racial Justice Team

Chris Deines
Jill Duis
Darlene Hopkins
Meagan McLaughlin
Andrew Patty
Jennifer Thomas
Sharon Yelton
Ruth Zimmerman

Resolution SA 22.06

Developing LGBTQIA+ Education and Cultural Competency as a Synod

In Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust (2009), the ELCA Churchwide Assembly “called upon all congregations, pastors, and other rostered leaders to reach out in welcome to all in accordance with previous Churchwide Assembly actions as affirmed by the 2005 Churchwide Assembly (CA05.05.18), and to assist members to understand what it means to be hospitable to all in the name of Christ regardless of sexual orientation.” Since that time, we as a church and society have developed new questions and issues pertaining to the full inclusion of LGBTQIA+ people. Same-sex marriage was granted as a right under Obergefell v. Hodges by the Supreme Court in 2015 opening up marriage for the first time to many of our members and congregations. Some of the most pressing political questions of our current time are laws written against our transgender siblings around participation in sports and access to medical needs that have particularly been focused on children. Our church in 2009 could not have anticipated our current reality and the issues that we face today.

Therefore, if we are called to be a church that is “hospitable to all in the name of Christ,” this means that we as a synod need to develop educational materials and support for our congregations and rostered leaders to understand what that means in our current time. We need to develop and sustain continued awareness of these issues in our church and society. The hope of this resolution is that we can create awareness and support the development of LGBTQIA+ educational materials and cultural competency that is complementary to our existing mission teams around environmentalism and racial justice. We hope that this resolution will help us as a synod live into our commitments made at Churchwide Assembly 2009 and support our congregations and rostered leaders in creating communities of faith where all are welcome.

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Therefore, we resolve that the Central States Synod take the following actions:

- Designate Hearts Across the Heartland (a grassroots organization of LGBTQIA+ affirming members, pastors, and congregations of the synod) as a ministry partner and LGBTQIA+ social justice team for the CSS. This group was formed in 2019 by Kansas City ELCA members and congregations organizing around having a presence at KC Pride and has become a bi-monthly zoom fellowship of those interested in creating a more inclusive church. We are currently co-led by Rev. Meagan McLaughlin (St. Louis and Central Missouri) and Rev. Andrew C. Patty (Kansas City and Kansas) assisting congregations in their areas.
- Direct Hearts Across the Heartland to develop educational materials on LGBTQIA+ issues and concerns that are being faced in our society for congregations and rostered leaders in partnership with Hearts Across the Heartland.
- Direct Hearts Across the Heartland to create resources and practices to make our synod meetings and spaces more welcoming for LGBTQIA+ persons
- Add sexual identity and gender expression to our current diversity training of rostered leaders.
- Partner with Kansas Interfaith Action and other community groups to raise awareness and advocate for the rights of LGBTQIA+ persons.

This Resolution is being presented by Hearts Across the Heartland through the following members of the Central States Synod:

Congregations (affirmed by Councils)

All Saints Lutheran (Blue Springs, MO)
Martin Luther Lutheran (Lee's Summit, MO)
Salem Lutheran (Lenexa, KS)
St. James Lutheran (Kansas City, MO)
St. Mark Hope and Peace Lutheran (Kansas City, MO)
Trinity Lutheran (Topeka, KS)
Unity Evangelical Lutheran (Bel Nor, MO)

Rostered Leaders

Aimee Frye Appell
Dan Baldwin
John Brudvig
Meagan McLaughlin
Andrew Patty
Sarah Peirce
Tina Reyes
Cynthia Schnaath
Micah Sievenpiper
Donna Simon
Rich Wolf

Resolution SA 22.07

Discerning a Path Toward Becoming a Reconciling in Christ Synod

The American Lutheran Church in their 1970 statement called Sex, Marriage, and Family approved the first statement in our Lutheran heritage that attempted to show pastoral care toward LGBTQIA+ members in the church and society. Since this time, as a community of faith we have wrestled with our positions around sexuality and gender expression in the church. In 1974, Lutherans Concerned for Gay People was formed to advocate for LGBTQIA+ members in the church and the first Reconciling in Christ (RIC) congregations started in 1984. The 1990s and 2000s brought the challenges of blessing same sex marriages and the role of LGBTQIA+ persons in ordained ministry. During this period, our own church expelled and suspended many of our members, pastors, and congregations for standing with our LGBTQIA+ siblings. In 2009, the ELCA Churchwide Assembly approved Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust which allowed for pathways for congregations to bless same-sex marriages and for LGBTQIA+ pastors to become rostered leaders in the ELCA. While over a decade has passed since that social statement, it continues to be a point of disagreement within the church.

The ELCA continues to progress on issues related to LGBTQIA+ equality in the church. Churches and pastors that were once expelled have returned to the roster. LGBTQIA+ pastors have been called and ordained for ministry. Many of our lifelong members have finally had their marriage vows affirmed in their local churches. In our church, bishops have been called that represent gay, lesbian, and transgender identities and more than half of the 65 Synods of the ELCA have become RIC Synods.

In our own synod, at least 15 churches and 3 campus ministries of the Synod have been designated RIC or are in the process of becoming RIC congregations. Both of our seminary partners, LSTC and Wartburg, have joined as RIC communities. This also means as a synod, we are starting to experience that change in the calling of LGBTQIA+ pastors to be leaders in our congregations. As a synod, we are becoming a more diverse community of faith through the movement of our congregations and faith leaders. Therefore, we are at a critical moment when as a synod we need to ask what our stance will be on this important topic of faith. This resolution presents a process for discerning whether the Central States Synod should become an RIC synod and what that would look like for us. In this, we hope that all voices across the Synod can be heard over this next year and clear results can be presented on our stance.

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Therefore, we resolve that the Central States Synod take the following actions:

- Partner with an LGBTQIA+ social justice team to organize listening sessions in each conference. These sessions should provide both education and conversations about the various beliefs held within the church. Additionally, at least one online session will be provided for accessibility with opportunity for breakout sessions with each conference.
- Direct the LGBTQIA+ social justice team to write a report that provides insights from the listening sessions held in each conference that reflect the views of the members of our synod and recommend a path forward.
- Direct the LGBTQIA+ social justice team to present the findings of the report to the Bishop and Synod Council for consideration for the Synod Assembly 2023. If the results present an affirmation of joining the RIC process, the Synod Council should recommend and present that to a vote of the Synod Assembly.

Addendum for Resolution Cost	
Hotel Rooms for Conference Meetings	\$600-800
Fuel Reimbursement for Travel	\$300-400
Snacks and Other Items for Meetings	\$600-700
Highest Total Estimated Cost	\$1500-1900

This Resolution is being presented by Hearts Across the Heartland through the following members of the Central States Synod:

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Salem Lutheran (Lenexa, KS)
St. James Lutheran (Kansas City, MO)
St. Mark Hope and Peace Lutheran (Kansas City, MO)
Trinity Lutheran (Topeka, KS)
Unity Evangelical Lutheran (Bel Nor, MO)

Rostered Leaders

Aimee Frye Appell
Dan Baldwin
John Brudvig
Meagan McLaughlin
Andrew Patty
Sarah Peirce
Tina Reyes
Cynthia Schnaath
Micah Sievenpiper
Donna Simon
Rich Wolf

Resolution SA 22.08

Thanksgiving for Ministry

Baptized, we welcome one another as fellow members of the Body of Christ and workers with us in the reign of God. Our merciful God gives us particular companions to know and to love in our pilgrimage here on earth. Since the last assembly, the following rostered ministers, whom we remember with thanksgiving and reverence, have died:

The Rev. Franklyn Pekarek, retired, Salina KS (7/10/2021)
The Rev. Bruce W. Keck, retired, Coffeetown KS (9/29/2021)
The Rev. Elwin Bergstraesser, retired, Lindsborg KS (10/22/2021)
The Rev. J. Rolland Christenson, Lindsborg KS (10/23/2021)
The Rev. Bill Pape, retired, Kansas City MO (11/13/2021)
The Rev. Donald Love, retired, Lees Summit MO (11/18/2021)
The Rev. Keith Klockau, retired, Kansas City MO (2/24/2022)

The following persons have served the Church faithfully, using their gifts and abilities to build up the Body of Christ, and have now retired from active ministry on the roster of the Church since the last Central States Synod Assembly.

The Rev. John Kotosky, from Lutheran Senior Services, St Louis MO (6/30/2021)
The Rev. William Yancey, from Bethel Lutheran, St. Louis MO (7/1/2021)
The Rev. Roger Dennis, from St. John Lutheran, Russell KS (8/1/2021)
The Rev. Kendra Nolde, from Central States Synod staff – part-time DEM (8/1/2021)
Deacon Rachel Wolf, from Our Savior Lutheran, Salem MO (8/1/2021)
The Rev. Lorna Paulus, from Disciples of the Plains Parish, Kensington KS (10/1/2021)
Deacon Suzie Everingham, from Good Shepherd Lutheran, Manchester MO (1/1/2022)
The Rev. John Reigstad, from Resurrection Lutheran, St. Louis MO (2/1/2022)
Deacon Mary Arie, from St. Mark Lutheran, Waterville KS and Trinity Lutheran, Greenleaf KS (2/1/2022)

The body of Christ gathers as congregations to proclaim the gospel, share the means of grace, and empowered to carry out God's mission in the world. The following congregation disaffiliated from the ELCA, discerning that they were called to participate in God's mission through other denominations:

Trinity Lutheran Church, Great Bend, KS (5/1/22)

After many years of faithful ministry, the following congregation closed, trusting that in the midst of death, there is always resurrection, and the mission of the church continues:

Resurrection Lutheran, St. Louis MO (1/31/2022)

Therefore, be it resolved that we recognize and give thanks for the ministry of these ministers and these congregations by requesting the assembly chaplain to offer a prayer of thanksgiving.