

Central States Synod 2017 Synod Assembly
Kansas City, Mo. • June 8-10

Resolution SA 17.01
A SEASON OF GLOBAL AWARENESS
Remembering our Companion Synods

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 share 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 all congregations within the Central States Synod and that congregations intentionally lift up the church around the world through prayer, song, publicity and in any way appropriate to the context of the congregation.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED THAT the congregations of the Central States Synod designate at least one Sunday during the Epiphany Season as a "**Sunday of Celebration for the Global Church.**" This Sunday would focus 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. This Sunday should also be a time to lift up local international ministries such as Ethnic Specific ministries within the Central States Synod, and congregational mission trips to places such as Latin America or the Caribbean.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED THAT **Sunday, June 17, 2018** be designated as a Sunday of solidarity with, and prayer for our Companion District, the Kotte District of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea (ELCPNG). *This date is chosen because it was in the summer of 1876 that the first Lutheran Missionary arrived in Papua New Guinea to begin mission work among the ancestors of the Christians of the Kote District.*

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED THAT **Sunday, September 23, 2018** shall be designated as a Sunday of solidarity with and prayer for our Companion Synod in Russia, 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 it was on September 17, 1997 that the church building that had been confiscated by the Soviets in 1935 was formally returned to the congregation of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Vladivostok and this marks the beginning of the resurrection of the Lutheran Church in Eastern Russia.*

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

Rebecca Blocksome
Jim Cooper
Rev. Gary Teske
Rev. Keith Holste
Rev. Penny Holste

Gary Kallansrud
Peggy Schaefer
Emily Greble
Daniel Lilienkamp
Alex Lang

Recommendation of the Resolutions Committee: Adoption

Date: May 11, 2017

Assembly Action: approved with correction (September 24 changed to September 23.)

Resolution SA 17. 02
Designation of Bethany Lutheran Home Sunday

Bethany Lutheran Home was established by the Augustana Lutheran Synod Convention held at Elim Lutheran Church in Marquette, Kansas in November 1911. The Bethany Home Association Board of Directors hereby acknowledges the gift(s) of love and financial support awarded pursuant to the resolution adopted in 2016 by the Central States Synod assembly in support of “the Bethany Home Sunday in November 2016” and looks forward to such continued support.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Bethany Home Association Board of Directors requests the 2017 Central States Synod assembly to designate Sunday, November 5, 2017 as “Bethany Home Sunday in November 2017” in support of our mission as a ministry partner of the ELCA.

Recommendation of the Resolutions Committee: Adoption

Date: May 11, 2017

Assembly Action: Approved

Resolution SA 17. 03
Designation of Lutheran Senior Services Weekend

Lutheran Senior Services is a faith-based, mission-driven, not-for-profit network that specializes in enhancing life for seniors ages, 62-plus, as they help them “Live Life to the Fullest.” Having 21 locations in Missouri and Illinois, Lutheran Senior Services offers quality choices and exceptional support for retirement living.

Lutheran Senior Services staffs all communities and its Hospice program with at least one chaplain to offer pastoral care and leadership to both residents and staff, and is owned by 105 Lutheran congregations from both the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod as an example of cooperation between our church bodies.

Additionally, Lutheran Senior Services is the 14th largest provider of not-for-profit senior living in the United States which provides over \$10,000,000 a year in benevolent care for those older adults who have outlived their resources, Considering these things, it is good for us to be aware of how God is at work among us and in the community touching lives with the Good News and through deeds of service,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT, all congregations of the Central States Synod be encouraged to use the bulletin inserts and the intercessory prayer petitions provided by Lutheran Senior Services on the weekend of September 16-17, 2017 as a way of informing our brothers and sisters in Christ of how God is at work through this ministry with seniors.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the assembly stand and offer our “Amen – Alleluia – Thanks be to God” to the work of ministry being done through Lutheran Senior Services.

Submitted by:

Roy Christell, Living Lord Lutheran Church (Lake Saint Louis, MO), John Mann, Trinity Lutheran Church (Chesterfield, MO), B.J. Arnold, Carolyn Jackson, St. Philip’s Lutheran Church (St. Louis, MO) John Lundin, Carrie McElfresh, Hope Lutheran Church (St. Charles, MO)

Recommendation of the Resolutions Committee: Adoption

Date: May 11, 2017

Assembly Action: Approved

<p>Resolution SA 17.04 Christian Vocation</p>

In the Bishop's report at the 2016 assembly, Bishop Roger Gustafson spoke of establishing a task force, that, building on the current Parish Ministry Associate Program in the synod, would facilitate new directions in leadership in order to more faithfully proclaim the gospel. The task force began its work with the understanding that God is about change and is calling us forward into a new way of doing and being church. Our role is to participate in this invitation from God. Underlying this call and invitation from God is the understanding of the "priesthood of believers" or the vocation of all Christians. This calling is lived out in shared leadership, lay and rostered, which is vital so that the church can continue to live out and proclaim the gospel.

As we observe the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation we seek to embody ever more fully Luther's Reformation call to the ministry of all the baptized; with the understanding that all the baptized share a single vocation of loving God and loving neighbors (Matt. 22:36-40). The Gospel of Jesus Christ sets God's people free to love and serve their neighbors in their daily lives in the various arenas God provides: in our families, at work, in our communities of faith, and in civil society.

At the 2015 Central States Synod Assembly Resolution SA 15.01 was approved. This resolution called upon congregations to: foster Christian vocation by encouraging and equipping people, from children to adults, to discern and claim their call to speak and live the faith in their daily lives through their many varied forms of service with our neighbors, the in family, the workplace, and in civil society; to partner with robust theological education networks of the ELCA (including Augsburg Fortress Publishers) in sharing and curating a wide range of resources that foster the life of faith in the world; and to experiment, create and innovate so that the Life of Faith Initiative becomes a vital part of their own ministries. It also resolved to make the Life of Faith Initiative (www.lifeoffaith.info) a central priority in all its expressions – congregations, synods, and churchwide organization. (adapted from Central States Synod Assembly Resolution SA 15.01).

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Central States Synod designate August 27, 2017 as "Christian Vocation Sunday" and prior to this date, the Central States Synod provide post resources on the synod website and in electronic communication to assist congregations to address and focus on Christian Vocation in liturgy, proclamation, and education.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED THAT congregations encourage and equip members in their Christian vocation through the provision of education, be it through congregational education session(s) for adults and youth, Synod-wide education sessions and discussion groups, or other means including resources from the Life of Faith Initiative (www.lifeoffaith.info) offering of theological training through schools of study, or other creative options.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED THAT the Central States Synod through the work of the PMA Task Force and other current synod teams continue to develop and provide educational information and opportunities regarding Christian vocation.

Submitted by:

Members of the PMA Task Force:

Peggy Schaefer, Melba Bangert, Gary Wahlers, Susan Langhauser, Stephen Zeller, Nancy Mitchell, Carolyn Wilson

Recommendation of the Resolutions Committee: Adoption

Date: May 11, 2017

Assembly Action: Approved

Resolution SA 17.05
Environmental Stewardship

The 1993 ELCA Social Statement, *Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice*, affirms that “we are called to care for the earth as God cares for the earth.” Further, *Caring for Creation* recognized that the urgency was already “widespread and serious, according to the preponderance of evidence from scientists worldwide [of] dangerous global warming, caused by the buildup of greenhouse gases, especially carbon dioxide” from the burning of fossil fuels, and that “action to counter degradation, especially within this decade, is essential to the future of our children and our children's children.” And *Caring for Creation* declares that the ELCA will seek to incorporate the principles of sufficiency and sustainability in our life. Therefore, the statement declares, “We will, in our budgeting and investment of church funds, demonstrate our care for creation.”

The 1999 ELCA Social Statement, *Economic Life: Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All*, recognizes that “the growth of economic activity during the twentieth century, and the industrialization and consumerism that fueled it, radically changed the relationship between humans and the earth. Too often the earth has been treated as a waste receptacle and a limitless storehouse of raw materials to be used up for the sake of economic growth, rather than as a finite, fragile ecological system upon which human and all other life depends.”

Climate change is having important impacts in the Central States Synod and elsewhere, including floods, drought, and destructive wildfires in 2016 and 2017. Global average temperatures have been increasing, and a new record high temperature was set in 2016. This is the third year in a row in which a new global average temperature was set. Losses associated with climate disasters are increasing.

Lutherans Restoring Creation believes it is important to communicate to all congregations of the Central States Synod the destructive effects of climate change on all God's creation, and disproportionately on those living in poverty and in the least developed countries, the elderly and children, and those least responsible for the emissions of greenhouse gases. It is also important to promote among its congregations and their members the need to foster better stewardship of the earth and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, in particular, our carbon emissions.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Central States Synod encourage its leaders and congregations to make use of the resources of Lutherans Restoring Creation for faith-based congregational initiatives addressing care of creation and the threat of climate **damage** (change), including personal “green discipleship” and action to conserve energy and/or use renewable energy, congregational educational programs and action plans that may include such things as installing solar panels to generate renewable electricity, utilizing the Lutheran study guide on the Encyclical Letter of Pope Francis (*Laudato Si, On Care for Our Common Home*), and supporting policies that seek to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Central States Synod recommend that all members of its congregations be active environmental stewards and “green disciples” by engaging in prayer for guidance, study to gain a better understanding of environmental issues, and action to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Submitted by Lutherans Restoring Creation Mission Table

Noni Strand, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Salina, KS

Jane Meyerkord, Lutheran Church of the Atonement, Florissant, MO

Jan Koch, Lutheran Church of the Atonement, Florissant, MO

Richard Nelson, St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Waterville, KS

Larry Erickson, First Lutheran Church, Manhattan, KS

Gary and Jeani Anderson, First Lutheran Church, Topeka, KS

Mindy Tillberg, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Salina, KS

Marc Anderson, Messiah Lutheran Church, Lindsborg, KS

Recommendation of the Resolutions Committee: No recommendation

Date: May 11, 2016

Assembly Action: adopted with amendment changing word from “change” to “damage”

Resolution SA 17.06 Refugees and Immigrants

Today there are more than 65 million people displaced from their homes by war, violence, persecution, economic and social dislocations and other factors -- more than at any time since the end of World War II. More than 21 million of those who are displaced have been forced to cross a border seeking safety and are considered refugees under humanitarian international law.

Most refugees hope to return to their homeland. Some are able to remain and integrate in to their country of first asylum, and a small number (half of 1%) seek and are granted resettlement in a third country like the United States. Refugees contribute greatly to a community's economy, culture and diversity.

The Lutheran church in the United States was founded by immigrants and ministry with newcomers through congregations, social ministry organizations and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service have been hallmarks of our demonstration of love of neighbors as together we have resettled more than 500,000 refugees. Throughout its history, the Lutheran Church has been a church comprised in part of immigrants and refugees.

The current Administration's Executive Orders seek to reduce the number of refugees admitted into the United States by more than 50 percent in FY 2017 and ban citizens from six majority Muslim countries from entering the United States. Recognized hate groups in the US are disseminating misinformation to fuel fear and incite actions against refugees and those that provide services to assist them.

Out of a shared concern to protect the homeland, refugees undergo extensive vetting by multiple US government agencies that often takes 18-24 months and defaults to deny admission to the issue if there is any discrepancy or question.

God's love for the stranger and our calling to love and serve the neighbors God gives to us are central to the Biblical narrative:

*Exodus 22:21, You shall neither mistreat a stranger nor oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.
Matthew 25:35, For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me.*

Individuals and communities in the US are sometimes struggling with the tension between their desire to welcome newcomers and fears for the change this brings in local communities.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Central States Synod will encourage all congregations of the Synod to support and engage in the ongoing work of welcoming refugees through Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service and various partner organizations and ministries within the confines of this Synod; and

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Central States Synod recommits to being an advocate and justice seeker for refugees, requests that the synodical bishop communicates our concerns to our Members of Congress and other federal, state and local elected officials, and encourages all congregations and their members to express their concern for refugees to their elected officials; and

¹See Trump Administration Department of Homeland Security assessment "Citizenship Likely an Unreliable Indicator of Terrorist Threat to the United States" <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/3474730-DHS-intelligence-document-on-President-Donald.html>; Terrorism and Immigration: A Risk Analysis, The Cato Institute, https://object.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/pubs/pdf/pa798_1_1.pdf; and U.S. Refugee Admissions Program, Department of State, <https://www.state.gov/j/prm/ra/admissions/>

Resolution SA 17.06
Refugees and Immigrants, continued

BE IT RESOLVED THAT all congregations of the Central States Synod be encouraged to pray for the displaced and refugees around the world, for aid and resettlement organizations, for just and humane governmental policies that reflect our nation's core values of welcome and inclusivity, and for a world where no one need flee their home for fear of violence, oppression or economic hardship; and

BE IT RESOLVED THAT each congregation and Synodical leadership be encouraged to celebrate and give thanks for the rich and diverse gifts refugees bring to our communities, our state[s] and our nation by annually hosting a Refugee Sunday (www.lirs.org/refugeesunday); and

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Central States Synod memorialize the ELCA churchwide assembly to request that the Presiding Bishop communicate the church's resolute commitment to the resettlement of refugees in the US and encourage steadfast support for this program to the President and Members of Congress; and further

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Central States Synod Council appoint a task force to explore becoming a Sanctuary Synod of the ELCA, to be supportive of congregations committed to protecting refugees and undocumented sisters and brothers from arrest and deportation by Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers. The task force is to report back to the 2018 Synod Assembly.

Submitted by,

Unity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Bel-Nor, MO

The Rev. Karen Scherer, Unity, Bel-Nor, MO

Gethsemane Lutheran Church Council, Saint Louis, MO

The Rev. Kendra Nolde, Gethsemane, Saint Louis, MO

The Rev. William Yancey, Bethel, University City

Mr. Daniel Lilienkamp, Saint Louis, MO – Area 10 Synod Council member

The Rev. Linda Anderson-Little, Saint Louis, MO,

The Rev. Gary Teske, Topeka, KS

Ms. Janis Hutchinson, Saint Louis, MO – Area 10 Synod Council member, Saint Louis, MO

Recommendation of the Resolutions Committee: No Recommendation

Date: May 11, 2016

Assembly Action: Approved

Resolution SA 17.07
Synod Assembly Meeting Dates

The majority of voting members at Synod Assembly are lay people who work during the week. In order to attend an assembly that begins on Thursday afternoon or evening and concludes by noon on Saturday, they must take vacation days. This makes finding voting members difficult.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT beginning in 2020 future Synod Assemblies begin on Friday evenings and conclude by noon on Sunday.

Submitted by:

Pastor Ethan Feistner, Falun/Salemsborg
Pastor Bill Peterson, Good Neighbor Parish, St. Paul/Hebron
Pastor Amy Truhe, Immanuel, Salina
Pastor David Strommen, Redeemer, Salina

Recommendation for the Resolutions Committee: No Recommendation

Date: May 11, 2017

Resolution SA 17.08
Congregations that Have Left the ELCA

The Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its head, and exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America seeks to function as people of God through congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization. In the course of its life together, a congregation may determine that it must terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and this synod in order that it might better pursue its mission through worship, nurturing its members and outreach through witness and service;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, THAT the Central States Synod in Assembly give thanks for Zion Lutheran Church, Everest, Kansas, and the partnership in mission and ministry we shared over the years; and,

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Chaplains of this Assembly lead us in prayer for all of Christ's Church.

Submitted by: Resolutions Committee

Recommendation of the Resolutions Committee: Adoption

Date: May 11, 2017

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Resolution SA 17.09
Retirements

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. Beverly Jo Arnold
The Rev. Daniel C. Friberg
The Rev. J. Vincent Guss
The Rev. Katharine Redpath
The Rev. James Schack
The Rev. James Strasen
The Rev. Julia Will

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Central States Synod in Assembly expresses appreciation to the above-named retired persons by standing and giving applause in thanksgiving for them and their service to the Church.

Submitted by: Resolutions Committee

Recommendation of the Resolutions Committee: Adoption
Date: May 11, 2017

Resolution SA 17. 10
Faithful Departed

Baptized, we welcome one another as fellow members of the Body of Christ and workers with us in the Kingdom of God. Our merciful God gives us particular companions to know and to love in our pilgrimage here on earth. Since our last convening:

The Rev. Robert L. Albin
The Rev. William D. Brooks
The Rev. Donald L. Hawk
The Rev. Holland H Jones
The Rev. Alfred W. Lindberg, Jr.
The Rev. Arthur Ohl

have passed through the gates of death to life eternal, and we remember them before God with reverence and affection, thanking God for their faithful service.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT , That the Central States Synod in Assembly stands to sing praise for our faithful departed rostered leaders, in the words of the hymn, "Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service" verses 1 & 4.

Submitted by: Resolutions Committee

Recommendation of the Resolutions Committee: Adoption
Date: May 11, 2017