**RC2016-03**

**Memorial Urging Stewardship of the Gift of Water**

**WHEREAS**, Holy Scripture reminds us that “the Holy habitation of the Most High” includes “a river whose steams make glad the city of God,” and that “waters of the sea may become fresh, so everything will live where the river goes,” and that “the Holy Spirit descended on [Jesus] in bodily form like a dove” when he was baptized in the River Jordan, and

**WHEREAS**, the ELCA social statement “Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice” states that “We see the despoiling of the environment as nothing less than the degradation of God’s gracious gift of creation,” and

**WHEREAS**, a watershed is the ground that water flows within as it moves toward a stream, river, or lake, and is a natural boundary within God’s creation, unlike arbitrary and haphazard geopolitical boundaries, and all of God’s creatures live in a watershed, and

**WHEREAS**, many of the watersheds in this country are degraded, and this environmental damage leads to water shortages and a crisis that disproportionately affects people of color and people with lower incomes, and

**WHEREAS**, water is an essential symbol within the Christian community, serving as the elemental connection in the initiation rite of baptism and in the liberation movement of crossing the Jordan, and

**WHEREAS**, the “Caring for Creation” social statement reminds us that “congregations have various opportunities during the year to focus on creation … -- Thanksgiving, harvest festivals, and blessings of field, water, and plants and animals,” and encourages to “observe Earth Day or Soil and Water Stewardship Week,” so as to protect and restore “natural and human habitats, including seas, wetlands, forests, wilderness, and urban areas,” and

**WHEREAS**, “watershed discipleship” requires that Christians acknowledge that water lies both at the center of our Christian rite of baptism and our current ecological and climate crisis, thus deserving deep theological treatment, therefore, let it be

**RESOLVED**, that the 2016 Minneapolis Area Synod Assembly memorialize the Office of the Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to direct the appropriate churchwide unit to provide to every active rostered leader resources to locate each congregation within its watershed district so that intercessory prayers can regularly include petitions naming specific watersheds, and let it be further

**RESOLVED,** that the 2016 MAS Assembly memorialize the Office of the Presiding Bishop to encourage congregations to bring containers of water from the local watershed into the sanctuary, to remind us that we are baptized in particular places, and let it be further

**RESOLVED**, that the 2016 MAS Assembly memorialize the Office of the Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to direct the appropriate churchwide unit to continue to develop strategies and provide resources to support areas struggling with natural or human-caused disasters that impact access to clean water, such as water contamination, drought, and floods – with an awareness that the impact of our environmental actions has disproportionate implications for communities of color and people with lower incomes, and let it be finally

**RESOLVED,** that the Office of the Presiding Bishop encourage congregations to plan events outside their doors, within their watersheds, utilizing the many biblical themes of renewal and liberation that water affords.

Author: Rev. Dr. Robyn Provis, on behalf of the Minneapolis Area Synod EcoFaith Network
Adopted: MAS Synod Council, March 22, 2016
Contact Person: Rev. Dr. Robyn Provis, Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church, pastor@salem-elca.org