

Report from the Reference and Counsel Committee 2019 and 2020 Resolutions

RC2019-01 Resolution on Paid Leaves: Parental and Care of Family Due to Illness

This resolution, making clearer parental leave policies suggested by the synod, passed. The synod's guidelines for Compensation of rostered and lay staff were amended to reflect the language of the resolution.

RC2019-02 Resolution in Support of the Social Statement on Justice for Women

This resolution, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women in the ELCA's predecessor bodies, passed. Most of the planned gatherings to celebrate this history were cancelled or postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

RC2019-03 Memorial in Support of the Social Statement on Justice for Women

This memorial passed and was forwarded to the Churchwide Reference and Counsel Committee. That committee unified this resolution with many similar ones from other synods around the country for presentation at the 2019 Churchwide Assembly. It was presented as a resolution at the 2019 Churchwide Assembly, where it also passed.

RC2019-04 Memorial Requesting a Social Statement on the Role of Government, the Nature of Civic Engagement, and the Relationship of Church and State

This memorial passed and was forwarded to the Churchwide Reference and Counsel Committee. It was presented as a resolution at the 2019 Churchwide Assembly, where it also passed. The Churchwide Office has initiated the process of beginning a social statement. In addition, due to the heightened anxiety around the 2020 election, and potential and real conflict within congregations, the Church Council prepared a Social Message concerning the role of government. The draft social message was widely distributed within the ELCA in 2020, seeking comment. Taking the responses into consideration, the Church Council passed a final version of the social message, making it available throughout the ELCA.

RC2019-05 Resolution Opposing "Conversion Therapy"

This resolution, asking the Office of the Minneapolis Area Synod Bishop to inform people within and outside of the ELCA about the assembly's condemnation of "conversion therapy." Bishop Ann contacted members of the legislative delegation serving the area of the Minneapolis Area Synod, as well as legislative leadership, informing them of the will of the assembly.

RC2019-06 Resolution for Budget Adjustments in the 2019 Operating Budget

This resolution passed as presented.

RC2019-07 Resolution for Proposed Budget for 2020

This resolution passed as presented.

RC2020-01 Resolution of Ministers of Word and Service in Synod Bodies

This resolution advocated that, with a change in the rostered status of deacons (ministers of word and service), those individuals still be assured of representation on all synod committees and made eligibility for those deacons as deans of a conference. With the cancellation of the 2020 Synod Assembly, this resolution passed by the Synod Council at the June 18, 2020 meeting, and the Nominations Committee of the synod was informed.

RC2020-02 Resolution Regarding Ministry With and in Support of Deaf Culture

This resolution calls on the United Table of the Minneapolis Area Synod to develop educational materials on Deaf culture and access for the congregations of the synod, and for the synod communications staff to provide accessible information on videos provided by the synod. With the cancellation of the 2020 Synod Assembly, this resolution passed by the Synod Council at the June 18, 2020 meeting. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the United Table has not met to begin the process of assembling usable resources for congregations. The synod's communication staff has included sign language interpretation and/or captioning on all but one of the public videos produced in 2020 or early 2021.

RC2020-03 Resolution on Action Regarding Climate Change

This resolution calls on the Minneapolis Area Synod staff to encourage further study in congregations on the topic of climate change. It also encouraged congregations of the synod to participate in 2020 in the World Day of Prayer for Creation. It additionally asked the EcoFaith Network (EFN) to be a resource to the congregations of the synod. With the cancellation of the 2020 Synod Assembly, this resolution passed by the Synod Council at the June 18, 2020 meeting. The EFN has regularly offered forums and worship resources for congregations, as well as produced a quarterly newsletter for all those who sign up for it or who attend an EFN event. The synod has addressed the topic of climate change occasionally, but did not call on congregations to participate in the 2020 World Day of Prayer for Creation.

RC2020-04 Resolution on Conflict-free Equipment Purchases

This resolution called on the synod to take into account conflict-free metals when purchasing new computers. The resolution did not have financial impact as part of the resolution, a requirement for all resolutions to be considered. A cursory discussion with the Minnesota Church Center staff determined there would be a significant cost to the MCC for upgrade of equipment. In light of the financial requirement, the Synod Council tabled this resolution at its September 17, 2020 meeting, sending it back to the author. (This resolution, with alterations to potentially address the financial implications, is resubmitted for consideration at the 2021 Synod Assembly.)

RC2020-05 Resolution on the Banning of Nuclear Weapons

This resolution called on the Bishop of the Minneapolis Area Synod to call federal representatives and ask them to demand that the nine nuclear nations be gathered to discuss elimination of nuclear weapons. After some discussion and concern about some of the specifics addressed in the resolution, the Synod Council tabled it at its September 17, 2020 meeting. (This resolution, with alterations to make less specific the particular means to address nuclear weapon abolition, is resubmitted for consideration at the 2021 Synod Assembly.)

RC2020-06 Resolution Regarding Sanctuary Synod Status

This resolution called on the Minneapolis Area Synod, following actions taken at the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to make the ELCA a Sanctuary Denomination, to define what the synod means by sanctuary, to take a more active leadership stance within the Twin Cities AMMPARO Task Force, to join parachurch and secular organizations in the protection of undocumented persons, and to advocate publicly for immigrants as recommended in the 2009 social policy resolution "Towards Compassionate, Just, and Wise Immigration Reform." With the cancellation of the 2020 Synod Assembly, the Synod Council, at its June 18, 2020 meeting, forwarded this resolution to the Public Voice Committee to develop a possible implementation plans, since this is a very complex resolution. The Public Voice Committee of the synod hosted two discussions about the requirements of the resolution and developed a draft proposal for implementing several of the "resolveds." At its September 17, 2020 meeting, the Synod Council approved the original resolution with three of the four suggested implementation recommendations offered by the Public Voice Committee. The fourth recommendation was returned to the Public Voice Committee for further consideration. Since that time, conversations about the synod's sanctuary policy and connection to AMMPARO have expanded, leaving the implementation of the resolution currently on hold.