

Memorial concerning the situation in Ethiopia

Whereas, Ethiopia – a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country – has been in the news for over four decades affected by natural and human caused disasters, drought, famine and war; and

Whereas, due to severe political persecution under three successive Ethiopian regimes over the last four decades has meant targeted imprisonment and killing, especially of the Oromo people, the largest group in Ethiopia; and

Whereas, the Oromo people belong to many faiths – Evangelical Christian (Lutherans), Islam, and Waaqeffataa – and members of these groups are refugees, many of whom fled on foot to neighboring countries to seek safety in different parts of the world; and

Whereas, since late 1970s and early 1980s the largest Oromo refugees were assisted and resettled by Lutheran Social Services and International Institute of Minnesota, by extension the largest East African communities are in our State of Minnesota; and

Whereas, among those refugees there were members of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY), which is the Lutheran Church in Ethiopia – the most targeted group because of members' faith, especially under the Marxist regime (1974-91) and again by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front regime (1991-2018) – who were targeted because of their demand for human rights and justice; and

Whereas, some of those refugees (former members of EECMY) faithfully continued to worship the Lord by setting up Bible studies groups in their own Oromo language in their newly adopted country and soon grew to become full-fledged congregations – Our Redeemer Oromo Evangelical Church of Minnesota (OROECM); and

Whereas, members of OROECM still have their friends and family members back in Ethiopia under continued persecution, severe human rights violation, and total insecurity which has led to starvation, absolute poverty, and a state of war; therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Minneapolis Area Synod in assembly memorializes the Office of the Presiding Bishop of the ELCA to call upon the Office of the Prime Minister of Ethiopia to respect and uphold the human rights and security of all Ethiopian people and refrain from arbitrary arrest and incarceration, especially through the targeting of Oromo people and respect the rule of law; and be it further

Resolved, that the Minneapolis Area Synod in assembly memorialize the Office of the Presiding Bishop, through the ELCA's United Nations Office, to call upon the Ethiopian Evangelical Churches Council, and all other faith groups within the country, to help to resolve all differences between the government and the opposition parties peacefully so that peace prevails, and necessary normal governing functions can prevail, including peaceful elections and the transfer of power according to the law of the land; and be it further

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40 **Resolved**, that the Minneapolis Area Synod in assembly memorialize the Office of the Presiding
41 Bishop to call upon the President of the Lutheran World Federation and the General Secretary of
42 the World Council of Churches to assist these faith communities in facilitating the discussions
43 leading to peace in the land and to provide technical support as needed; and be it further
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45 **Resolved**, that the Minneapolis Area Synod in assembly memorialize the Office of the Presiding
46 Bishop to call upon the Office of the Prime Minister of Ethiopia to realize that perpetual state of
47 war, human rights abuse, injustice, imprisonment and killings never provide solutions; and
48 instead, to opt for peaceful solutions and goodwill among all the people of Ethiopia; and be it
49 finally
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51 **Resolved**, that the Minneapolis Area Synod in assembly memorialize the Office of the Presiding
52 Bishop to call upon the Office of the Prime Minister of Ethiopia to release all political prisoners
53 without any precondition and call all political and concerned parties into a national dialogue to
54 resolve the ongoing conflict.
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