

**Memorial for continued work on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility at the
2027 ELCA Youth Gathering**

WHEREAS, when asked about the greatest commandment Jesus responds, “love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these (Mark 12:29-31),” and,

WHEREAS, institutions embracing DEIA policies (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility) have come under attack from the federal government with funding reduced, staffing drastically cut, and vulnerable populations experiencing the greatest impact, and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), with a membership that is approximately 96% white and 95% of the ELCA’s clergy are white, and

WHEREAS, the ELCA adopted a social message on *Human Rights* in November 2017 and a social statement entitled *Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture* in 1993 and adopted, “HOW STRATEGIC AND AUTHENTIC IS OUR DIVERSITY: A Call for Confession, Reflection, and Healing Action” in 2019. This adopted work has outlined clear theological framing, strategic goals, and concrete recommendations that provide a roadmap for our continued work, and

WHEREAS, racial injustices in the Midwest resulted in the public murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, an incident that requires more healing and reconciliation, and

WHEREAS, ELCA Youth Gatherings have been reflective of our larger churchwide body as noted above and there have been reports each cycle of structural and systemic injustice and racial harm, and therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Minneapolis Area Synod (MAS), meeting in assembly, memorializes the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to request that the 2027 ELCA Youth Gathering Team work with the Minneapolis Area Synod as the synod creates a rapid response team to be available throughout the 2027 ELCA Youth Gathering to increase cultural awareness and decrease harm during the event, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Minneapolis Area Synod (MAS), meeting in assembly, memorializes the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to request that the ELCA Youth Gathering Team continue to expand and require all gathering staff, volunteers and participant leaders to participate in authentic diversity¹ training prior to the start of 2027 ELCA Youth Gathering and future gathering cycles, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Minneapolis Area Synod (MAS), meeting in assembly, memorializes the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to request that the ELCA Youth Gathering Team explore options to implement a racial equity audit for the Youth Gathering that would address barriers for participation with the goal of increasing, and strengthening the leadership of our youth participants with nonwhite and intersecting identities.

Author(s): Jan Anderson, Grace Lutheran Church, Andover, 763-742-4313, jmanders79@gmail.com; Rochelle Poore, Grace Lutheran Church, Andover, r.poore@comcast.net; Pastor Deanna Kim Bassett, Christ the River of Life, (612) 234-5655, crolpastor@gmail.com; Pastor Joanna Mitchell, Grace Lutheran Church, 507-210-5467,

joannam@graceandover.org; Shari Seifert, Calvary Lutheran Church, 612-558-1134,
shari@shariseifert.com

Contact person: Pr. Joanna Mitchell, Grace Lutheran Church Andover, 507-210-5467,
joannam@graceandover.org

25 voting members of the Minneapolis Area Synod on 4/29/2025

1. Pastor Maria Markman, Grace Lutheran Church, Andover, Minneapolis. Area Synod
2. Tennessee Vincent, Christ the River of Life Lutheran Church, Minneapolis
3. Pastor Sarah Moat, Christ Lutheran Church in Blaine, Minneapolis Area Synod
4. Deacon Lauren Morse-Wendt, Edina Community Lutheran Church, Minneapolis Area, Synod
5. Pastor Natalia Terfa, Edina Community Lutheran Church, Minneapolis Area Synod
6. Pastor Laurie A. Eaton, retired, Minneapolis Area Synod
7. Charlie Wold, Grace Lutheran Church, Andover, Minneapolis Area Synod
8. Pastor Melissa Pohlman, Central Lutheran Minneapolis, Minneapolis Area Synod
9. Thomas Weah, Christ the River of Life Lutheran Church, Minneapolis
10. Pastor Eric Hoffer, Salem Lutheran Church, Minneapolis
11. Interim Pastor Peter Samuelson, Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Minneapolis
12. Karen Volker, Nativity Lutheran St. Anthony Village, Minneapolis
13. Pastor Kyle Hanson, St. James Lutheran Church, Crystal
14. Pastor Ian Coen-Frei, Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Church, Minneapolis
15. Pastor Kyle Jackson, Mount Calvary Excelsior, Minneapolis
16. LuAnn Schmaus, Christ Lutheran Church Blaine, Minneapolis
17. Fran Sorensen, Christ Lutheran Church Blaine, Minneapolis
18. Pastor Angela LaMoore, Nativity Lutheran, St. Anthony Village, Minneapolis
19. Beth Erickson Nativity Lutheran, St. Anthony Village, Minneapolis
20. Pastor Paul Nelson, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Eden Prairie
21. Brenda Blackhawk, Salem Lutheran Church, Minneapolis
22. Deacon Kyle Soderberg, Nativity Lutheran Church, St. Antony Village, Minneapolis
23. Maizy Johnson, Nativity, Lutheran Church, St. Anthony Village, Minneapolis
24. Pastor Anne Schaefer, Elk River Lutheran Church, Minneapolis
25. Asefa Wakjira, Our Redeemer Oromo, Minneapolis
26. Rev. Sara Jensen, Lutheran Church of Christ the Redeemer, Minneapolis
27. Pastor Neal Cannon, Woodlake Lutheran Church, Richfield
28. Pastor Siri Strommen, Atonement Lutheran, Bloomington

References:

¹ *Authentic diversity* as defined demographically matching the ethnic and racial composition of their respective contexts, as stated in the ELCA constitution (5.01.A16.). They are likewise called to recognize that race and ethnicity intersect with other marginalizing traits (including gender, sexuality, and ability; and that people in these groups are also vulnerable.) From Adopted: *“HOW STRATEGIC AND AUTHENTIC IS OUR DIVERSITY: A Call for Confession, Reflection, and Healing Action,”* 15th triennial Churchwide Assembly on August 9, 2019, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.