

SYNOD COUNCIL RESOLUTION 21.02 – ESTABLISHING SISTER CONGREGATION RELATIONSHIPS

VOTED: No vote, motion amended
SA21.06.xx To adopt Resolution 21.02

Title Establishing Sister Congregation Relationships
Date March 17, 2020, affirmed April 24, 2021
Submitted by Conference Deans

Today, as ever, the unity we enjoy in Christ is crucial for our mission in and to the world. We are anxious about dwindling church membership, a shortage of rostered ministers, and the overwhelming needs of our neighborhoods, communities, and world. In our anxiety, we sometimes fail to see the resources, experience, and energy available across congregations. And, ignoring our unity in Christ, we all too readily fall into patterns of isolation, or even competition. We believe the Spirit gathers the church. We believe the Spirit, in the same way, longs to gather the congregations.

- WHEREAS since 1988, the ELCA has been one church body organized in three expressions – congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization; each expression having its particular functions but all three together sharing a common mission of doing God’s work in the world and proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ; and,
- WHEREAS the work to which God calls us in the world is never done alone or in isolation; and,
- WHEREAS we recognize with joy and thanksgiving that God has already adequately provided us with all that we need to participate in the unfolding kingdom of heaven upon the earth; and,
- WHEREAS we see a need in the C/SIS to foster stronger relationships and greater interdependence between congregations in our territory; therefore be it
- RESOLVED that congregations of the C/SIS, trusting in the Holy Spirit, work to build relationships between one another through a sister congregation program; and be it further
- RESOLVED that the Synod Council, with the Bishop’s office, work to randomly assign sister congregation pairs, rotating these companionships on an annual basis; and be it further,
- RESOLVED that the Synod Council provide simple and practical suggestions for encouraging congregations to pray for one another, to communicate, to work in common mission, to build relationship, and to exchange wisdom – ever seeking to mark and follow the movement of the Holy Spirit across the Church; and be it further,
- RESOLVED that each congregational council be encouraged to appoint an individual in their congregation to be an accountable liaison to the sister congregation; and be it further,

RESOLVED that the entire Synod approach this task as an opportunity for growth and joy which always accompany our unity in Christ Jesus.

VOTED: Motion carried.

SA21.06.09 To amend Resolution 21.02, adding the following words in red to the first resolve: that congregations **and specialized ministries** of the C/SIS, trusting in the Holy Spirit, work to build relationships between one another through a sister congregation program; and be it further,

VOTED: Motion carried (For – 184, Against – 4)

SA21.06.10 To adopt Resolution 21.02 as amended

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