

18-03

Memorial on the ELCA's 50th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women

WHEREAS, in 1970 both the Lutheran Church in America and American Lutheran Church in their national conventions voted to ordain women; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA rejoices in these actions of its predecessor church bodies and will recognize the 50th anniversary in 2020 of the ordination of women; and

WHEREAS, we express our profound gratitude for the many and varied ways the gifts of ordained women have advanced God's mission through this church; and

WHEREAS, we learned in the research related to the 45th anniversary of women's ordination of some progress but also significant disparities for women in the areas of preparation for ministry, all calls including first calls, mobility, compensation, ministry roles, and debt following seminary education and

WHEREAS, the same research uncovered denigrating and discriminatory experiences of many ordained women, some particularly acute for ordained women of color; and

WHEREAS, the church is called to reflect in church and society its roles of advocate and model for the respect, dignity, and equal rights due all women, including the ordained women of this church; and

WHEREAS, this church is simultaneously addressing justice and women in its social statement under consideration and the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we call upon all synods in their 2020 assemblies to include celebration and special recognition of ordained women upon the 50th anniversary of authorizing this ordination practice; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we call upon our seminaries, colleges, campus ministries, outdoor ministries, social ministry organizations, synods,

and congregations to highlight women preachers, teachers and speakers throughout 2020 in recognition of the diversity of gifts women's ordination has brought to our church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we call upon congregations throughout the ELCA to participate in the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women in our church through worship services, Bible studies and other efforts to celebrate and recognize the importance and contributions of ordained women; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we call upon all members of this church to examine our consciences, and confess our sins and complicity in whichever circumstances by the outright or silent actions women have faced including barriers, discrimination, or sexual harassment as they prepared for and served as ordained women in this church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we call upon this church to renew efforts in education on the intersection of the sins of sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia, and classism, and to develop healing interventions offering hope and support to those who experience these sins to the point of despair about ministry; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we call upon our seminaries to include intentional coursework and resources to equip pastoral leaders in identifying and ministering in situations of gender-based discrimination and violence; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we urge all congregations, synods, and the Churchwide organization in 2020 to conduct a gender analysis wherein each can develop strategies to promote and protect gender equity and justice, with particular focus on addressing the areas of preparation for ministry, call process including first calls, mobility, compensation, ministry roles, and debt following seminary education; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we call upon this church to establish goals and strategies in each synod of achieving for ordained women comparable compensation with that of ordained men in all calls by 2025, reporting the outcome of this action step at the Churchwide Assembly in 2026; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we call upon this church to establish goals and strategies in each synod of achieving for ordained women access to ministry roles where women are currently underrepresented, with a particular focus on the challenges faced by women of color receiving viable first and second calls; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we call upon the Churchwide expression's Domestic Mission Unit to develop, undertake, and successfully complete a strategy specifically related to the debt of women of color after seminary; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we call upon all candidacy committees to examine their practices in light of the findings in the 45th anniversary research; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we request initiatives and other matters pertinent to the full and just participation of ordained women in this church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we request all church publications to plan features in 2020 on the ordination of women, lifting up the amazing talents and gifts this church has received from its ordained women, the barriers ordained women still experience in this church, and the steps outlined in this memorial to overcome these barriers; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we invite the prayers of all members of this church for the successful outcome of these initiatives; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southwest California Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to affirm this resolution.