

## Recommendation on Ministry Policies

CA09.05.23 ASSEMBLY ACTION: YES-771; NO-230 (77% - 23%)

1. **RESOLVED, that in the implementation of any resolutions on ministry policies, the ELCA commit itself to bear one another's burdens, love the neighbor, and respect the bound consciences of all.**

CA09.05.24 ASSEMBLY ACTION: YES-619; NO-402 (60% - 40%)

2. **RESOLVED, that the ELCA commit itself to finding ways to allow congregations that choose to do so to recognize, support, and hold publicly accountable lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships.**

CA09.05.26 ASSEMBLY ACTION: YES-559; NO-451 (55% - 45%)

3. **RESOLVED, that the ELCA commit itself to finding a way for people in such publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships to serve as rostered leaders of this church.**

CA09.05.27 ASSEMBLY ACTION: YES-667; NO-307 (68% - 32%)

WHEREAS, guided by the Holy Spirit, this church raises up, calls, supports, and maintains rosters of ordained ministers, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers for public ministry in service of the mission of Christ and seeks faithfully to discern in each situation what will best serve that mission; and

WHEREAS, this church maintains these four rosters according to policies and procedures that are developed and applied according to the specifications of chapters 7 and 20 of its *Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions*; and

WHEREAS, this church has a polity, processes, and procedures that trust designated individuals and bodies to use churchwide standards to make decisions about fitness for rostered ministry in general and for call to a specific ELCA ministry; and

WHEREAS, some members, congregations, candidacy committees, and synods of the ELCA have discerned gifts and skills for rostered ministry in some people who are or contemplate being in publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships and have indicated their conviction that rostering and calling such people would serve the mission and ministry of this church; and

WHEREAS, other members, congregations, candidacy committees, and synods of the ELCA acknowledge those gifts and skills for ministry, but believe that this church must maintain an expectation of celibacy for any gay or lesbian person, whether or not that person is in a publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationship, and thus believe that this church cannot call or roster people in such relationships; and

WHEREAS, the Church of Christ sometimes has been surprised by the actions of the Spirit, as is reported in the book of Acts when the inclusion of Gentiles was affirmed; and

WHEREAS, public accountability of rostered leaders in the ELCA is essential to nurturing the trust that is necessary for effective ministry; and

WHEREAS, although there is no generally recognized civil or ecclesial status that corresponds to heterosexual marriage for publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships, this assembly has committed itself to find ways to recognize, support, and hold publicly accountable lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships; and

WHEREAS, present ELCA policies prohibit the rostered service of any and all people in publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships, but this assembly has committed itself to find a way for people in publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships to serve as rostered leaders of this church; therefore, be it

4. **RESOLVED**, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America call upon its members to commit themselves to respect the bound consciences of those with whom they disagree regarding decisions on the call and rostering of individuals in publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships, in this church and with churches ecumenically and globally; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that this church, because of its commitment to respect the bound consciences of all, declare its intent to allow structured flexibility in decision-making regarding the approving or disapproving in candidacy and the extending or not extending of a call to rostered service of a person who is otherwise qualified and who is living or contemplates living in a publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationship; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America make provision in its policies to eliminate the prohibition of rostered service by members who are in publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America make provision in its policies to recognize the conviction of members who believe that this church should not call or roster people in a publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationship; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that the appropriate churchwide unit(s) be directed to develop, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, and the Church Council be directed to approve, appropriate guidelines for a process by which congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization could hold people publicly accountable in their relationships who are in or contemplate being in lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships and who seek to be on the rosters of this church; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that the Committee on Appeals be directed to develop, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, and the Church Council be directed to approve, appropriate amendments to “Definition and Guidelines for Discipline” and the Vocation and Education program unit be directed to draft, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, and the Church Council is directed to approve, appropriate amendments to the “Vision and Expectations” documents and the Candidacy Manual to accomplish the intent of this resolution; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that additional policies be developed, as necessary, so that those whom this church holds responsible for making decisions about fitness for rostered ministry in general and for call to a particular specific ELCA ministry may discern, and have guidance in discerning, the fitness for ministry of a member living in a publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationship; and be it finally

**RESOLVED**, that this church continue to trust its established processes and those to whom it has given the responsibility to discern who should and should not be rostered or called to public ministry in this church.