



STANDING AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS ***Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA***

(N.B. The nomenclature used at the time of the original adoption of these resolutions has been retained. To indicate present application, current nomenclature has been added in parentheses and italics.)

The Standing and Continuing Resolutions document is in three sections

- Policy on Standing and Continuing Resolutions (page 1)
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- Continuing Resolutions of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (page 9)

A. Policy on Standing and Continuing Resolutions

1. Resolved, that each final affirmative action by a convention (*Assembly*) of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the (*Evangelical*) Lutheran Church in America [which shall not include either steps of a parliamentary nature taken in the course of consideration of proposed action or actions having effect only during the convention (*Assembly*)] shall be expressed in the form of a resolution and that such resolutions shall be serially numbered with respect to each convention (*Assembly*) and published as an appendix to its Minutes.
2. Resolved, that the Constitution Committee be requested to review annually the Standing Resolutions of predecessor synods and the Continuing Resolutions of this Synod, with the aim of deleting those that are no longer applicable; that newly adopted Continuing Resolutions be inserted; and that all applicable Standing and Continuing Resolutions immediately follow the Constitution and Bylaws as part of the *Minutes* of each annual Synod Assembly. (1991)

STANDING RESOLUTIONS OF PREDECESSOR SYNODS

B. Resolved, that the following resolutions be recognized as having their source in actions taken by a convention of The Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania and the Adjacent States (a predecessor synod of the Eastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Lutheran Church in America) in the year identified by parenthetical reference in each resolution and as having continued force in the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in the form herein set forth.

1. Resolved, that no meeting, whether formal or informal, of the members of the council of a congregation or parish, without reasonable notice to its pastor or vice-pastor (*interim pastor*), shall have any validity and that it be ruled wholly improper for any council member knowingly to attend such a meeting. (1932)
2. Resolved, that any bequest to the synod, to any of its boards, or to any objective administered by the synod or one of its boards (*Teams*), shall be applied to capital improvement or endowment unless otherwise designated by the terms of the bequest. (1954)

3. Resolved, that the following rules shall apply in the continued administration of the trust held by the synod known as the Church Extension Fund:
 - a. Upon recommendation of the Board of Home Missions (*Mission Services Committee*) and after authorization of the Executive Board (*Synod Council*), a short-term loan may be made from the fund to a mission to assist in the purchase or improvement of real estate, upon the following conditions:
 - (1) That the amount of the short-term loan outstanding to the mission at one time be limited to \$25,000;
 - (2) That each such loan be secured by a judgment note or real estate mortgage maturing in not more than five years;
 - (3) That the terms as to interest, if any, and schedule of principal repayment be determined by the Executive Board (*Synod Council*).
 - b. For the purpose of this resolution status as a mission shall be determined by the Board of Home Missions (*Mission Services Committee*) with the concurrence of the Executive Board (*Synod Council*).
 - c. Any part of the fund not invested in loans as above provided shall be productively invested in such items as are proper for trusts under Pennsylvania law, and any income produced by the fund shall be capitalized annually. (1946, 1952, 1959)
4. Resolved, that the synod affirm its position regarding residential accommodations for its parish pastors on the following terms:
 - a. The pastor's residence should provide suitable facilities for hospitality, family living, and retreat for study and meditation.
 - b. The church council (*Congregation Council*) should review periodically the residential facilities of the pastor with whom it serves to determine their adequacy for the achievement of the purpose of the congregation in the community.
 - c. The place of the pastor's residence should be in the area representative of the work and life of the congregation and community. (1959)
- C. Resolved, that the following resolutions be recognized as having their source in actions taken by a convention of the Eastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Lutheran Church in America (a predecessor synod of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Lutheran Church in America) in the year identified by parenthetical reference in each resolution and as having continued force in the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in the form herein set forth.
 1. Resolved, that the synod encourage its congregations to affiliate with and actively support their local city, area, and county councils of churches whose constitution, bylaws, or other governing regulations are approved by the Executive Board (*Synod Council*), as conforming to the principles announced by the (*Evangelical*) Lutheran Church in America as controlling in this regard. (1962)
 2. Resolved, that before the synod requests the Board of American Missions (*Division for Outreach*) to survey an area for possible new mission occupancy, in accordance with Item

4,b, of Section X(A) of the bylaws of the Lutheran Church in America (*ELCA Continuing Resolution 16.11.C91.c.*), the Board of Home Missions (*Mission Services Committee*) shall inform councils (*Congregation Councils*) of the appropriate district (*Mission District*) of its intention. (1963)

3. Resolved, that a retired minister, or a missionary serving under the Board of World Missions (*Division for Global Mission*) who is unable to attend conventions (*Assemblies*) of the synod shall be regarded by the Committee on Registration and Excuse as excused. (1963)
4. Resolved, that at the time parish (*pastoral charge*) alignments are dissolved by action of the Executive Board (*Synod Council*), congregations which had membership in the dissolved parish (*pastoral charge*) may request transfer to another district (*Mission District*) and the Executive Board (*Synod Council*) may authorize such transfer. (1964)
5. Resolved, that the president (*Bishop*) of synod be empowered, at his (*or her*) discretion, to provide legal assistance and/or bail for pastors and members of congregations who for reason of Christian concern for human rights, eschewing violence, are subject to arrest and/or incarceration. (1964)
6. Whereas the Ministerium of Pennsylvania has stated in convention (*Minutes 1959, page 113*): "That every person regardless of race has the right to make his (*or her*) home in our midst and that we owe him (*or her*) our friendship and Christian concern for his (*or her*) welfare;" and

Whereas the Lutheran Church in America has stated in convention (*Minutes 1964, page 665*) that:

"6. The church, its congregations, synods, agencies, institutions, and individual members should support the enactment and enforcement of federal, state or provincial, and local legislation which seeks to guarantee to all persons equally, without racial discrimination; (d) The right to rent, buy and occupy housing in any place and the right of access to means of mortgage financing;"

Be it therefore resolved:

- a. That we call upon all pastors and members of our congregations to support open occupancy in housing in their neighborhoods. We urge them to assist every sound and reasonable effort to end the exclusion of any person, on account of race, color, creed, national ancestry or origin, from equal opportunity to rent, lease, or purchase living accommodations with all facilities and services at equitable cost.
- b. Further, that we call upon all members as well as pastors of our congregations to visit in Christian love newcomers to their neighborhoods, whatever their race, and to invite them into full participation in community affairs.
- c. Further, that we call upon all members of our congregations, when selling real estate, to make it available for sale to all qualifying purchasers, and to this end to exercise great care in the selection of real estate agents who will handle such transactions in accordance with the wishes of the seller.
- d. And further, that synod extend to all its pastors and congregations the assurance of its continuing approval and support in the implementation of these principles. (1965)

7. Acknowledging prior resolutions of the Eastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Lutheran Church in America and its predecessor body, the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, and acknowledging the resolutions of the Lutheran Church in America and its predecessor church bodies concerning the ministry of the church to all persons, and being aware of the continuing need to serve effectively in the midst of a mobile population with rapid sociological changes; therefore:
 - a. We commend the congregations of the synod which have remained to serve all people in areas where major racial shifts are taking place.
 - b. We again encourage our congregations to include in their evangelism visitations all persons in their communities without distinction as to race, color, religious experience, in order to discover and win the unchurched.
 - c. Where there are members of local churches in which racial integration is taking place, or is likely to take place, who are unwilling to continue membership in such congregations for this reason, we encourage such members to examine their consciences in the light of Holy Scripture and the doctrine and decisions of the church.
 - d. We urge pastors of congregations to which such disaffected members may be seeking letters of transfer to encourage them to remain in their own congregations and to demonstrate Christian love toward all who have been made one in Christ. (1965)

D. Resolved, that the following resolutions be recognized as having their source in actions taken by a convention of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Lutheran Church in America (a predecessor synod of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) in the year identified by parenthetical reference in each resolution and as having continued force in the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in the form herein set forth.

1. Resolved, that the "Declaration of Trust" here following be the synod's "Church Renewal and Endowment Fund."

Know all men by these presents, that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Lutheran Church in America (hereinafter referred to as the synod) does hereby declare the terms of the trust upon which it holds assets heretofore received or hereafter to be received in accordance with its Constitution and the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania upon the dissolution or extinction of congregations which are members of the synod:

- a. The fund created hereunder shall be known as the Church Renewal and Endowment Fund.
- b. The assets to which this declaration relates are
 - (1) those held by the congregation upon express or implied trust for a specific and restricted religious or benevolent purpose; and
 - (2) Other assets, including real estate, held by the congregation upon express or implied trust for general and unrestricted religious or benevolent purposes of the congregation or otherwise.
- c. Assets referred to in Paragraph 2(a) (b(1)) hereof shall be held in trust in perpetuity with income applied from time to time to the precise purposes for which they were held by the congregation without change, except as practicality may from time to time demand.

- d. Assets referred to in Paragraph 2(b) (*b(2)*) hereof shall be held in trust in perpetuity with income applied from time to time as determined by the synod's Executive Board (*Synod Council*) to general religious and benevolent purposes with priority given to the extent practicable to its application in the same geographical community in which the work of the extinct congregation was carried on and in turn with next priority to other communities nearest resembling it.
- e. As to the investment and administration of the trust:
- (1) The assets of this trust shall be invested in accordance with the laws of Pennsylvania on the subject of the investment of the funds of non-profit corporations, provided, however, that it shall be considered a proper application of income to invest principal with or without interest in real estate, or in mortgages upon real estate, whether of first or junior lien, used for the purpose declared in Paragraph 4 (*1.d above*), so long as the title of this trust to such real estate or encumbrance is appropriately recognized.
 - (2) The assets of this trust may be pooled for investment purposes, or may be pooled with other assets which the synod holds in trust, so long as the accounting records with respect thereto appropriately reflect the fractional interest applicable to this trust.
 - (3) Investments of this trust may be held in the name of synod or its nominee.
 - (4) The synod may at any time by action of its Executive Board (*Synod Council*) transfer administration of all the assets of this trust for investment purposes to a banking institution in accordance with the provisions of the non-profit corporation laws of Pennsylvania.

In witness whereof, this Declaration of Trust is executed this first day of January, 1972.
The Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Lutheran Church in America.

By: Wilson E. Touhsaent, President
Attest: Claude E. Schick, Secretary (1972)

(The above policy statement was adopted by the Executive Board on December 30, 1971, and reported to the 1972 convention.)

2. Each year interest is accumulated from various sources. This earned income is not restricted and has not been designated. Some of this income has from time to time been expended by the Executive Board to provide assistance for a project not included in the synodical budget. The earned income is presently received from the following sources: Church Extension Fund, Ritter Fund, Church Renewal and Endowment Fund, Operating Account, and Synod General (Principal held by Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod).

Use should be made of this earned income and the following is recommended:

Resolved (1) That the treasurer be authorized to place earned income into a common fund (*Synod Mission Fund*), to be used for special projects or for synod budget items as designated from time to time by the Executive Board (*Synod Council*); (2) that should an emergency arise between meetings of the Executive Board (*Synod Council*), the treasurer be authorized to expend up to \$3,000 from the fund upon unanimous consent of the other officers and the chairman of the finance committee. (1972) (1980)

(The above policy statement was adopted by the Executive Board on March 13, 1972, and reported to the 1972 convention.)

3. Resolved, that "Youth Convo" become an annual event in conjunction with the convention (*Assembly*) of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod. (1973)
4. Resolved, that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod concur with the action of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod in the revision of Recommendation 18 adopted at the Organizing Convention of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod (*Minutes, page 34*) whereby such action would read, effective January 1, 1974, as follows:

That, except where the donor specifies otherwise, a bequest naming the Eastern Pennsylvania Synod or the Ministerium of Pennsylvania in the will of a person dying on or after January 1, 1974, shall be allocated to the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod or the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod according to the place of probate of such will, subject to these further rules:

- a. Should the decedent be a resident of neither synod, the allocation shall be made to the synod in which he last resided;
 - b. Should a case arise which is not covered by the foregoing rules or in which their literal application would frustrate the probable intent of the decedent, the officers of the two synods shall resolve the matter according to their best judgment of the probable intent. (1973)
5. Policy statement regarding granting of loans to congregations including the use of loan funds for which responsibility is assigned to the Committee on American Missions and Social Ministry (*Mission Services Committee*):

Eligibility

The eligibility of a congregation for loans from funds for which the Committee on American Missions and Social Ministry (*Mission Services Committee*) is assigned responsibility shall be determined by:

- a. The requirements stipulated in the terms of the particular trust or fund from which the loan funds will be drawn;
- b. The recommendation of the Committee on American Missions and Social Ministry (*Mission Services Committee*);
- c. The affirmative action of the Executive Board (*Synod Council*) of synod.

Guidelines for Committee Recommendation

In recommending approval of a loan request for funds assigned to its responsibility, the Committee on American Missions and Social Ministry (*Mission Services Committee*) shall be guided by the following general principles:

- a. Priority shall be given to congregations related to the Division for Mission in North America of the L.C.A. (*Division for Outreach of the ELCA*) and to congregations undergoing mission adjustments, *i.e.*, where such major changes as parish realignment, union

dissolution, relocation, consolidation, merger, or major program revision have occurred or are anticipated.

- b. In the case of congregations not related to the Division for Mission in North America (*Division for Outreach*) or not undergoing mission adjustment, the Committee on American Missions and Social Ministry (*Mission Services Committee*) shall be satisfied that the use of the funds is consistent with the committee's overall mission objectives, and that an ongoing relationship is established between the committee and the congregation.

Guidelines for Congregations Requesting Loans

Congregations requesting loans from funds for which the Committee on American Missions and Social Ministry (*Mission Services Committee*) is assigned responsibility shall:

- a. State the amount requested and the proposed use of the funds, and provide any other documentation required by the particular trust or fund from which funds are to be drawn;
- b. Provide a schedule of repayment agreed to by the committee;
- c. Provide such financial data and other information as the committee may request;
- d. Give evidence of stewardship efforts or plans on behalf of the ministry of the congregation, the synod, and the (*Evangelical*) Lutheran Church in America.

Continuing Responsibility of the Committee

Following approval of a loan by the Executive Board (*Synod Council*) of the synod, the Committee on American Missions and Social Ministry (*Mission Services Committee*) shall:

- a. Call to the attention of the congregation and make available to it the resources of the church-at-large, particularly in the areas of mission identification and stewardship;
- b. Monitor repayment of the loan, carrying out an annual review of all outstanding accounts;
- c. Represent the Executive Board (*Synod Council*) in communicating with congregations that are delinquent in repayment;
- d. Report annually to the Executive Board (*Synod Council*) on the status of all outstanding accounts. (1975)

(The above policy statement was adopted by the Executive Board on March 3, 1975, and reported to the 1975 convention.)

6. Resolved, that, when studies are requested in this synod, the request be accompanied by an estimate of the cost. (1977)
7. Resolved, that the privilege of voice at synodical conventions (*Synod Assemblies*) be extended to candidates approved for ordination. (1978)
8. Resolved, that earned income from gifts and bequests designated for specific purposes be excluded from the synodical Mission Fund and disbursed to the designated purposes. (1979)

9. Resolved, that the Executive Board (*Synod Council*) be authorized to implement the recommendation to establish an office of dean for retired pastors and their families and for pastors' widows (*surviving spouses*), such office to be described and filled upon recommendation of the bishop, function as an adjunct to the bishop's office, and to be related to the Committee of Deans. (1981)
10. Resolved, that the Professional Development Committee annually determine and publish a congregational guideline for minimum base salary for clergy and other professional leaders. (1983)
11. Resolved, that service of an unexpired term, or a partial term, of two years or more in duration, shall count as a full term in determining eligibility for any election or appointment which is subject to limitation of terms. (1984)
12. Resolved, that pastors, lay delegates, congregations, districts (*Mission Districts*), committees, and commissions presenting synod convention (*Assembly*) issues to the Committee of Reference and Counsel be urged to submit these issues in writing at least 45 days prior to the convention (*Assembly*). The Committee of Reference and Counsel is urged to mail a report of its recommended actions on those issues to pastors and lay delegates at least 30 days prior to the convention (*Assembly*). (1984)

(The above resolution was adopted by the Executive Board on December 14, 1983, and reported to the 1984 convention.)

13. INVESTMENT PHILOSOPHY

- a. Investment in Board of American Missions Certificates (*the ELCA Mission Investment Fund*) shall be continued. The amount of the commitment shall be reviewed annually by the Executive Board (*Synod Council*).
- b. The "Prudent Man Rule" shall apply. Exceptions may be authorized by the Executive Board (*Synod Council*).
- c. Investment decisions will reflect the social concerns and policy statements of the Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. (1987)

(The above policy statement was adopted by the Synod Council on September 23, 1987, and reported to the 1988 Synod Assembly.)

14. Be it resolved, that we as the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the (*Evangelical*) Lutheran Church in America commit ourselves to a covenant relationship with the Episcopal Diocese of Bethlehem to work together, wherever possible, in every aspect of ministry on a synodical/diocesan and local level in order to avoid unnecessary duplication, gain strength in shared resources, provide more effective ministry, and gain visible expression to the unity we have in Christ, and to that end we will strive faithfully to:
 - a. Engage in mutual prayer for the life and ministry of our synod/diocese and to encourage our congregations/parishes (*pastoral charges*) in every community to pray for each other.
 - b. Encourage and support congregations and parishes (*pastoral charges*) in like spirit to form covenant relationships on a local level by which they commit themselves to common worship, study, and mission.

- c. Provide opportunities on synodical/diocesan levels for God's people to worship, study and do mission together, deepening our understanding of historical and theological traditions.
- d. Encourage synodical/diocesan committees, task forces, agencies, and institutions with similar ministry concerns to provide for liaisons from the respective denominations and to share with these people all committee or task force communications.
- e. Invite official observers to all the conventions and meetings of our synodical/diocesan governing boards.
- f. Encourage a continued close working relationship between the bishops, staff, and ecumenical committees of the synod/diocese.
- g. Consider joint use of physical facilities.
- h. Review, through our ecumenical committees, our commitment to one another at least once a year. (1986) (1989) (1992)

**CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS
OF THE NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD
OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

- E.** Resolved, that the following resolutions be recognized as having their source in actions taken by an Assembly of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, or by the Synod Council, in the year identified by parenthetical reference in each resolution and as having continued force in this Synod in the form herein set forth.
- *1. It is the goal of this Synod that 10% of the membership of Synod Assemblies, councils, committees, boards, and/or other organizational units be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English. (1987, 2001)
 - 2. Resolved, that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America recognize, affirm, and support the Eastern Pennsylvania Lutheran Camp Corporation as the entity to provide camping ministry for this Synod. It further recognizes and affirms the relationship of Holy Trinity Church, Dingmans Ferry, with Camp Koinonia, and encourages this relationship to continue. A similar relationship of this congregation with Eger Homes of Staten Island, New York, is also recognized. (1987)
 - 3. Whereas Muhlenberg College is an institution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

Whereas Muhlenberg College carries out its ministry in higher education on the territory of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America recognize Muhlenberg College and affirm and support its ministry as integral to the ministry of this Synod;

And be it further resolved, that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod call upon its members to support Muhlenberg College with their prayers and gifts. (1987)

4. Whereas the Good Shepherd Home, Lutheran Services Northeast and Lutheran Services of the Lehigh Valley are social ministry organizations affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

Whereas these agencies and institutions carry out their ministry chiefly on the territory of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod recognizes the Good Shepherd Home, Lutheran Services Northeast and Lutheran Services of the Lehigh Valley; and

Be it further resolved, that this Synod affirm the caring ministry of these agencies and institutions, and call upon its members to support that ministry through their prayers and gifts. (1987, 1998)

5. The Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod and the social ministry organizations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America serving in northeastern Pennsylvania, wishing to maintain and strengthen the historic relationship that has furthered the cause of the church's common ministry on this territory, accept the following principles to govern their partnership in ministry:

- a. The Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod shall provide moral and financial support to the agencies and institutions of the church on its territory.
- b. The social ministry organizations shall seek to coordinate their programs and ministry with the total ministry of the church on this territory.
- c. The social ministry organizations will report annually to the Synod Assembly.
- d. The social ministry organizations shall consult with the Synod prior to any major change in program and ministry.
- e. The social ministry organizations shall consult with the Synod and the appropriate entity of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America prior to any change in charter, constitution, or bylaws.
- f. The social ministry organizations shall seek the approval of the Synod prior to any capital fund appeals among the congregations of the Synod.
- g. The social ministry organizations shall seek approval from the Synod prior to any special appeals beyond those initially authorized.
- h. The social ministry organizations shall consult with the Bishop of the Synod concerning the employment of an executive director, and concerning the employment and call of a rostered person. (1987, 1998)

6. Whereas the Good Shepherd Home is a valued corporate social ministry agency of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

Whereas the Good Shepherd Home is integral to the mission of the Church;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America joyfully authorizes its participation as the corporate member of the Good Shepherd Home. (1987)

7. Resolved, that this Synod be a member of the Pennsylvania Council of Churches, and that the Bishop be authorized to appoint the required representatives. (1987)
8. Resolved, that each congregation is encouraged to adopt the Model Constitution for Congregations or one acceptable to this Synod, which is not in contradiction to the Constitution and Bylaws of the ELCA. (1987)
9. Acknowledging the rediscovery of the relationship between the ministry of each congregation and the place in which it is located, the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America affirms the important distinction between the words "parish" and "congregation." A parish is a local expression of God's inhabited creation; a congregation is a local expression of the Church. Therefore, let it be resolved that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America defines "parish" as the place in which congregations engage in God's mission through their ministry. The congregation in a place (*i.e.*, parish) is the Church for that place. (1987)
10. Resolved by the Assembly of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod that it affirm its concern and commitment to develop its ministry both to persons living with HIV/AIDS and to the public by:
 - a. Asking each member of the Synod to commit him/herself to prayer, service, and advocacy on behalf of persons living with HIV/AIDS and those at risk of being infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (those who are exposed to behaviors of risk);
 - b. Asking congregations of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod to discuss HIV/AIDS, and to engage in education so that parishes' members, neighbors, and strangers may be welcome in our Christian community;
 - c. Asking the Commission on Social Ministry in the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA to accept responsibility for the support of HIV/AIDS programs throughout the Synod;
 - d. Asking the Lutheran Coalition on Public Policy to continue to do advocacy at the state level for persons living with HIV/AIDS and those at risk of being infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus. (1988, 1991, 1995)
11. Resolved that at least one youth (below the age of 21) be included in the lay male and lay female Group C on the ballot for voting members of the ELCA Churchwide Assemblies. (1988)
12. Resolved, that, upon endorsement of the Ecumenism Committee and recommendation of the Synod Council, the "Covenant Agreement between the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod and the Episcopal Diocese of Bethlehem," previously adopted in 1986, be reaffirmed by the Synod Assembly. (1989)
13. Resolved:
 - a. that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America affirm its continuing opposition to the legalization of any new forms of gambling in Pennsylvania, and its opposition to the licensing of Off-Track Betting facilities in this state, and that such opposition be communicated by the Bishop to its congregations and members and to appropriate executive and legislative officers of the Commonwealth, and that members of the congregations be encouraged to write to their representatives expressing their support of an amendment to Act 127 which would require a local

referendum in each township or municipality in which an OTB facility is proposed; and in the meantime, or failing the passage of such an amendment,

- b. that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod encourage its pastors and laity to be vigilant to detect any proposals or filings to establish OTB facilities on synod territory, and in the event of such detection in any targeted township or municipality, to mount a campaign of expressed church opposition and to inform township commissioners and zoning board members or other appropriate municipal officials of such proposals, and to encourage them to draft zoning ordinances of a prescriptive and disadvantageous sort. (1989)
14. Resolved, that the use of styrofoam products and other non-biodegradable products that are not recyclable be avoided as much as possible at all functions of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod and its Mission Districts; and, be it further resolved, that all congregations of our Synod be urged to adopt and implement similar practices in the use of such products at their congregational functions. (1989)
 15. Resolved, that annually the Synod Council shall enter into consultations between the Synod and congregations to determine program responsibilities and congregational commitment goals for support of the Synod's budget; and that the aforementioned commitment goals be based on either a) the congregation's statement of intention for the previous year, or b) the congregation's actual remittance for the most recent year of record, plus an agreed-upon growth-factor in either case. If such figure is not reached by mid-January, the Synod Council shall see that a proportionate share of the total fiscal proposal be assigned. Any congregational appeal for exception to this policy shall be presented to the Synod Council for its review and action. (1989)
 16. In June 1989, the Synod Assembly adopted a "Priorities for Ministry" report, establishing synodical priorities for the 1990s. The text of that report is in the *1989 Minutes Book*, pages 32-37. (1989)
 17. Resolved, that this Assembly:
 - a. Affirm the need to increase minority enrollment in all Lutheran colleges and universities;
 - b. Ask that Lutheran pastors of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod encourage minority members of their congregations to apply to Lutheran colleges and universities;
 - c. Request that the report of Muhlenberg College include in its written report to this Assembly statistical data describing the goals and accomplishments in minority recruitment and attendance. (1990)
 18. Resolved, that all congregations be encouraged to develop a respite care type program in conjunction with the Lutheran social ministry agency in their own area, and/or support already existing supportive services (such as the Volunteer Home Care Program of Lutheran Services Northeast, Respite Care of Lutheran Services of the Lehigh Valley, or the Neighbors of Monroe County Program). (1990, 1998)
 19. Resolved, that the response of the ELCA Assembly or of the ELCA Church Council to memorials initiated in this Synod be reported to the next Synod Assembly through the Report of the Synod Council. (1990)
 20. Whereas the baptized of this Church are called upon to renounce the forces of evil, the devil, and all his empty promises, therefore be it resolved, that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod encourage all the baptized to pray for and minister to all who are being tempted and

misled by the occult and Satanism; and be it further resolved that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod identify and provide resources that are available and necessary to assist clergy and laity to educate the Christian community concerning the occult and Satanism. (1990)

21. Resolved, that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, through its Synod Council and the office of the Bishop, recommend to dissolving ELCA congregations and agencies in this Synod that a minimum contribution of \$1,000 of their assets, upon dissolution, be made to the Endowment Fund of the Lutheran Archives Center at Philadelphia, the interest of which will be utilized to provide perpetual care for these records. (1991)
22. In September 1992, a special one-day Synod Assembly adopted revised recommendations of a Comprehensive Study Task Force, regarding the Synod's structure, staff, and morale. The text of those recommendations is in the *1992 Minutes Book*, pages 160-162. (1992)
23. Resolved, that, upon endorsement of the Ecumenism Committee and recommendation of the Synod Council:
 - a. the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America reaffirm and commit itself to the agreement entitled, "A Covenant Agreement Between the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Diocese of Bethlehem of the Episcopal Church."
 - b. the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod commit itself, as a Synodical family, to continue to work together faithfully wherever possible in every respect of ministry on the Diocesan/Synodical and local level in order to avoid unnecessary duplication, gain strength in shared resources, provide more effective ministry, and give visible expression to the unity we have in Christ.
 - c. the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod seriously study the Concordat proposed by Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogues III, in preparation for the day we will recognize each other's ministry and enter into full communion. (1992)
24. Resolved, that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its congregations endorse and support the preparation and publication of a collection of congregational profiles with funding from sources outside the Synod budget; and be it further resolved, that specific arrangements be entrusted to the Lutheran Archives Center at Philadelphia representing the synods of Region 7 along with the Regional Coordinator. (1993)
25. Resolved, that the leaders of the Synod intensify their effort to promote youth activity in Synod functions; and be it further resolved, that the youth be recognized by membership on various committees in the ministry of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, and that the Synod staff and the Synod Council be asked to implement this resolution. (1993)
26. Resolved, that the Secretary of this Synod be requested to ask each of the social ministry and educational institutions to which this Synod contributes more than \$10,000 a year through its annual budget or through special appeals to report annually to this Synod's Assembly, beginning in 1994, the salaries and benefits paid to its top executive and to its three most highly compensated employees. (1993)
27. Resolved, that congregations of this Synod considering a major capital expenditure are advised to consult with the Synod Bishop's designated representative, the Mission Services

Committee, before starting a major project involving capital expenditures. The purpose is to have the benefit of the Mission Services Committee in-depth feasibility study, both as to the method and cost of construction as well as to the funding capabilities. A copy of this report from the Mission Services Committee shall be submitted to the Synod Council for information purposes. (1993)

(The above resolution was adopted by the Synod Council on September 28, 1993, and reported to the 1994 Synod Assembly.)

28. Resolved, that the functions and events of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod and its Mission Districts and Clusters be planned in such a manner and conducted in such places that physically, mentally, and sensory challenged persons are not excluded; and, be it further

Resolved, that congregations of this Synod participate in the survey being conducted by the Acceptance Through Accessibility Action Committee, so that a list of architecturally accessible facilities can be developed; and, be it further

Resolved, that congregations whose facilities are not accessible might consider undertaking the necessary renovations so that they too can be added to the list of architecturally accessible facilities; and, be it further

Resolved, that the second Sunday in October be declared Acceptance Through Accessibility Sunday, emphasizing, through education and worship, sensitivity toward and inclusion of persons with disabilities and the mission which is mutually shared by all baptized persons, regardless of their limitations. (1994)

29. Resolved, that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod affirm its continuing opposition to the legalization of any new forms of gambling in Pennsylvania, and that such opposition be communicated by the Bishop to its congregations and members and to appropriate executive and legislative officers of the Commonwealth, and that members of congregations be encouraged to write to their Representatives and the Governor expressing their opposition to House Bill #1833 as well as any other proposed expansion of gambling in Pennsylvania. (1994)

30. Resolved, that we encourage congregations to be involved in education concerning our responsibilities to the environment; and, be it further

Resolved, that congregations support organized efforts to protect the rain forests. (1994)

31. Resolved, that starting with the 1995 Synod Assembly a special offering be received to contribute to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal through the "Burger-of-the-Month Club." (1994)

32. Resolved, that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod strongly encourage the congregations to provide opportunities for youth involvement in leadership roles by supporting and helping them to grow as leaders. (1994)

33. Resolved, that, prior to the Assembly at which a Bishop of the Synod is to be elected, the Synod Council appoint a Task Force to ascertain and define the needs, concerns, and priorities of the Synod, and that the report of the Synod Council or appointed Task Force be disseminated prior to the spring Mission District assemblies.

Resolved, that, following the report of the second ballot for the Office of Bishop, a period of not less than three (3) hours be set aside for the purpose of the discussion of issues, Mission District caucuses, presentations by the nominees, and prayer. (1995)

34. COMPENSATION GUIDELINES TASK FORCE RESOLUTIONS

- a. Resolved, that, in accordance with S14.05. of the Synod Constitution, all professional leaders complete the annual report for the Bishop. This report lists compensation.
- b. Resolved, that each Congregation Council submit a report annually to the Bishop regarding compensation of professional leaders, paying particular attention to the section related to steps that will be taken to raise compensation to minimum levels if they are not currently being met.
- c. Resolved, that the Bishop and his/her associates consult with Congregation Councils where minimums are not being met. Consultation will automatically occur after the filing of the annual "Report for Ordained Minister Under Call From A Congregation" or the "Report for Associate in Ministry Under Call From A Congregation." All consultation shall be handled through the office of the Bishop.
- d. Resolved, that, with the goal of developing a process to achieve just and equitable compensation, the Bishop may appoint, or the Congregation Council or professional leader may request, specially trained consultants to facilitate continuing discussion.
- e. Resolved, that the Bishop and his/her associates raise the issue of compensation publicly (*i.e.*, at Synod Assemblies, Mission District meetings, etc.) and give testimony to it as a matter of economic justice for those who serve the church.
- f. Resolved, that the Professional Leadership Support Committee (through the Mentoring Program or in an existing event) provide an opportunity for education and discussion about compensation packages with new pastors and Associates in Ministry, emphasizing the leader's role in the process of compensation negotiation.
- g. Resolved, that all Congregation Councils and professional leaders develop an annual covenant of mutual goals, expectations, and responsibilities. The Mutual Ministry/Staff Support Committee will have, among its duties, the responsibility to review and evaluate the implementation of the covenant and to recommend appropriate compensation for professional leaders.
- h. Resolved, that, in arriving at a salary and benefits "package," additional consideration be given to (a) prior work experience, especially in the case of "second career" leaders; (b) size and complexity of the employing congregation; (c) cost of living in different areas of the Synod; and (d) performance and achievement factors.
- i. Resolved, that the Professional Leadership Support Committee remind Congregation Councils of the importance of the housing equity allowance as a benefit to pastors in parsonages.
- j. Resolved, that the Committee of Deans rewrite the current booklet used in the vacancy study process, so that it provides a more candid picture of the congregation, including a salary range for the professional leader(s), an overview of its financial health, and other factors which might influence a "happy marriage" between professional leader(s) and congregation(s). A candid summary of the "exit interview" of the preceding professional

leader shall be prepared and included in information provided to a prospective candidate(s).

- k. Resolved, that every candidate considering a call to a congregation in this Synod shall be given a copy of the last annual meeting report of that congregation.
 - l. Resolved, that a special fund be established in this Synod, to which congregations or individuals be encouraged to contribute, to supplement the support of professional leaders in viable ministries where congregations are genuinely unable to meet the minimum base salary and benefit guidelines for professional leaders. Congregations applying for and receiving grants from this fund would need to demonstrate annually what steps they are taking to reduce and/or eliminate the amount needed. Congregations are encouraged to work toward the goal of an annual contribution of one per cent of the "defined compensation" (ELCA Board of Pensions definition) of their professional leader(s) to this fund. A special committee shall be formed to propose to the Synod Council how this fund would operate and to make recommendations for disbursement of funds to the Synod Council. (*N.B.*, the model of the program in use in the New Jersey Synod could be adapted for use in this Synod).
 - m. Resolved, that, in 1995, the Professional Leadership Support Committee conduct a pilot program in at least ten congregations of the Synod in different settings, or in one Mission District with diverse congregations, that would make use of a compensation workbook to assist Mutual Ministry/Staff Support Committees or Congregation Councils in arriving at compensation levels for professional leaders for 1996. (*N.B.*, such a booklet is in use in the New England Synod.) Based on the results of that pilot program, a workbook shall be distributed to all congregations on an annual basis. (1995)
35. Resolved, that, in order that we may more fully be the body of Christ, specialized ministries be given the opportunity to share their story with the Assembly in a brief manner; and, be it further
- Resolved, that all those specialized ministries that wish to make a report be divided into three groups and that each group be given the opportunity to report in successive assemblies on a rotating basis; and, be it further
- Resolved, that each specialized ministry, in the year that it is selected to report, work with the Synod Communications Committee to produce a videotaped presentation no longer than five minutes, and that the videotape shall comprise the report to be shown at Assembly, and that there be an opportunity for questions after the presentation. (1996)
36. Resolved, that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, gathered in assembly, encourage its congregations to become Safe Havens for all children and their families and caregivers, by:
- Building Christ-centered, positive trusting relationships that nurture the healthy growth of children and strengthen families.
 - Using our resources to provide a sanctuary for children.
 - Creating a Gospel-centered, faith-based teaching and learning environment of hospitality that welcomes all children with their families and caregivers.
 - Developing programs and places that help children to flourish.
 - Collaborating with other faith communities, agencies, and service organizations that work for the well-being of children in our community.
 - Working with the government for more public measures that support the well-being of children.

- Supporting the efforts of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to meet the basic needs of children through Lutheran social ministry organizations, as they provide caring services for children, and through the ELCA World Hunger Program, which carries our concerns for children through the world.
- Encouraging all congregations to have adults working with children to undergo the background checks (Pennsylvania Act 34) regarding child abuse. (2000)

37. Resolved, that congregational leaders, including youth convo participants, be encouraged to educate members as to how mission support funds are used employing such resources as the ELCA's "Making Christ Known: Faith for a New Century," and that congregational leaders, including youth convo participants, provide more intentional informational sessions to their congregations about mission support and the programs thereby affected. (2000)

38. Resolved, that the Synod Assembly continue to entrust to the Synod Council the responsibility for scheduling and planning synod assemblies, as currently mandated by the Synod Constitution; and,

Resolved, that the Synod Council will continue "to consider seriously alternatives to 'traditional' annual three-day assemblies, especially being sensitive to concerns about cost." (2001)

39. Resolved, that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America make known its caring and concern for gays and lesbians and their families by affirming:

- that gay and lesbian people share with all others the worth that comes from being individuals created by God and for whom Christ died; and
- that gay and lesbian people are welcome within the life and mission of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod; and
- that as members of this Synod, gay and lesbian people are expected and encouraged to share in all aspects of this Synod's mission consistent with ELCA policy; and

Be it further resolved, that the Synod encourage member congregations and related institutions of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod to continue to study and discuss issues related to homosexuality and the church; and

Be it further resolved, that the Assembly direct the Synodical Bishop and the Gay and Lesbian Ministry Task Force to continue to provide opportunities and resources to encourage the discussion of welcoming gays and lesbians in the Synod and its congregations.

Be it further resolved, that the Assembly direct the Secretary of the Synod to forward a copy of this resolution to Lutherans Concerned/North America, requesting recognition as a Reconciling in Christ Synod. (2001)

40. Resolved, that this Synod, gathered in Assembly, reiterate its continuing opposition to the expansion of current and new gambling opportunities in PA.

Therefore, be it further resolved that members of NEPS congregations be encouraged to contact their PA legislator and the Governor to express opposition to any expansion of gambling. (2003)

41. Resolved, that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod in assembly affirms the objectives of the ELCA evangelism strategy, and urges its congregations to commit themselves to these objectives:

- Pray for the renewal of this church
- Prepare and renew evangelical leaders
- Teach discipleship
- Start and renew congregations (2003)

42. Resolved, that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod in assembly urges its Social Ministry Organizations to be in conversation with the Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania, and

Be it resolved, that the secretary of the synod write a letter to each Social Ministry Organization on the synod territory declaring its support for advocacy, and seeking a similar spirit in each of them, and

Be it resolved, that the Bishop in either his annual consultation or special conversations with the Organizations, lift up the importance of advocacy, and

Finally, be it resolved, that the Synod Council be encouraged to consider shifting funding to give adequate support to both Social Ministry Organizations and Advocacy. (2003)

43. Resolved, that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod in assembly urges all of its congregations to review the wages and benefits provided to lay employees, seeking to ensure that

- Wages are commensurate with skills, expectations and responsibilities
- The possibility of offering health benefits is explored when needed and possible.
- Opportunities to gain new skills are provided
- A forum for addressing concerns or grievances is made available. (2004)

44. Resolved, that recognizing that we are all “blessed to be a blessing,” congregations of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod be strongly encouraged to make the ministry of stewardship a high priority; and be it further

Resolved, that all congregations, but especially those in time of pastoral transition, be encouraged to review their current stewardship ministries, develop four-year stewardship plans and draw upon the resources offered by the ELCA and the synod to grow in the theology and practice of stewardship. (2004)

45. Resolved, that ELCA members, congregations, and related institutions of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod examine Augsburg Fortress resources for quality, price, and level of service whenever purchasing decisions are made, and be it further

Resolved, that when such resources are equal in quality, price, and level of customer service, they will purchase resources from Augsburg Fortress in support of this ministry of the church. (2005)

46. Resolved, that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod in assembly requests that the Division for Church in Society and the Division for Higher Education and Schools, or their successor units, to help the congregations of the ELCA to:

- Educate themselves about ADD, and
- Support persons with ADD as they seek treatment, and
- Encourage persons with ADD to share their gifts with the church. (2005)

47. Resolved, that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod in assembly urges its congregations and members to:

- Lift up in prayer all those living in poverty and struggling for dignity,
- Use ELCA study resources pertaining to these issues, including the Social Statement on Economic Justice, and
- Exercise responsible consumerism as a way to live out our commitment to justice. (2005)

48. Resolved, that beginning with the 2006 Synod Assembly, the following Rule of Procedure be adopted:

Resolutions received by the Committee of Reference and Counsel less than two weeks before the opening of the synod assembly will be brought before the assembly to decide whether or not they should be considered. Such resolutions will be considered only if the assembly votes by a simple majority to consider them. (2005)

49. Resolved that this assembly call upon every member and every congregation of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod to join with all Christians in taking up political responsibility as their faith and conscience demand; and to work faithfully, with all persons of good will, as God has been faithful to us in Christ to seek human well-being on earth; and be it further

Resolved that every member and every congregation of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod be encouraged to learn the process by which our local, state, and federal governments operate; and determine how we can be involved in decision making in order to participate in the political process; and be it further

Resolved that every member of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod be urged to exercise his or her electoral privilege as a follower of Christ. (2006)