

MEMORIAL

Memorial to Restructure the Governance of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Whereas, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) was formed in 1988 from three Lutheran church bodies, i.e., the Lutheran Church in America (LCA), the American Lutheran Church (ALC), and the Association Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC), with 5.2 million members and 11,133 congregations; and

Whereas, the Commission for a New Lutheran Church, envisioning stability and anticipating growth, developed a structure and polity with three interdependent entities, i.e., the churchwide organization, 65 synods, and 11,133 congregations, organized for the realities of the time; and

Whereas, the leadership of the Commission for a New Lutheran Church expressed an eagerness to form “a new Lutheran church truly committed to the Gospel and organized for effective mission in today's world; “and

Whereas, over the last 34 years, the ELCA has decreased in size to 3.3 million members and 8,972 congregations; and

Whereas, the governing documents, constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of the ELCA do not allow these interdependent entities to reorganize quickly to meet the changing realities for effective mission in today's world; and

Whereas, the churchwide organization as well as many synods and many congregations, having decreased significantly in size and resources, struggle to meet the expected work as assigned by the governing documents; and

Whereas, the Church Council of the ELCA, through its adoption of Strategic Directions 2025, has called for a “well-governed, connected, and sustainable church;

Whereas, it is critical that the stated mission of the ELCA be not only consistent with Lutheran expectations for the institutional church but also realistic with respect to human and fiscal resources; and

Whereas, it is critical that the structure of the ELCA meet the needs of effective mission in today's changing world; therefore, be it

Resolved, that Northeastern Ohio Synod in assembly memorialize the 2022 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Church in America to direct the Church Council to establish a Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church that, working in consultation with the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council, shall reconsider the Statements of Purpose for each of the expressions of this church, the Principles of Organization, and all matters pertaining thereunto, presenting its findings to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly in preparation for a reconstituting convention to be called under the rules for a special meeting of the Churchwide Assembly.