

Resolution D: 2016 Synod Resolution Calling for Oregon to be a Sanctuary Synod and Memorialize the ELCA to be a Sanctuary Denomination

Whereas, Jesus said we would see him in the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick and the prisoner; and

Whereas, we are living in dangerous times in this nation as immigrants from the Central and South Americas and those fleeing warfare in the Middle East are being persecuted; and

Whereas, the Lutheran Church over the last 75 years has been a leader in refugee resettlement through Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services, Lutheran Community (Family) Service and thousands of congregations; and

Whereas, after World War II one in six Lutherans in the world were refugees or displaced persons, Lutherans and the Lutheran Church in this country with the participation of 6,000 congregations resettled 57,000 refugees in the United States; and after the fall of Saigon in 1975 Lutheran congregations sponsored over 50,000 refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos; and

Whereas, today 12 million sisters and brothers from Central and South America are living in the shadows, while contributing many gifts and talents to the wonderful diversity of this nation; and

Whereas, the ELCA Social Statement from 1998 proclaims, “We draw on the best of our nation’s traditions as a refuge and haven for the persecuted and destitute when we affirm that we support a generous policy of welcome for refugees and immigrants, and that we will advocate for just immigration policies including fairness in visa regulations and in admitting and protecting refugees”; and

Whereas, Romans 15:7 admonishes us to “welcome one another, just as Christ has welcomed you to the glory of God” and Hebrews 13:2 exclaims “In exercising hospitality to the stranger many testified that they received more than they gave as if they had welcomed angels without knowing it”; and

Whereas, Mary, Joseph and Jesus were refugees fleeing to Egypt to avoid Herod’s violence; and

Whereas, the declaration of Sanctuary is an ancient custom of the church which calls for the church to be a safe place for those escaping persecution; and

Whereas, the Interfaith Movement for Immigrant Justice (Oregon) and the National Sanctuary Movement of Church World Service have been birthed over the last several years; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Oregon Synod endorse and fully support the existing Sanctuary congregations of the Oregon Synod, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Oregon Synod declare itself one of the first Sanctuary Synods in the ELCA while encouraging all congregations to become Sanctuary churches ready to protect refugees and undocumented sisters and brothers from arrest and deportation by Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers (ICE), and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Oregon Synod memorialize the 2016 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to declare itself the first denomination in the country to call itself a Sanctuary denomination, encouraging all 10,500 Lutheran churches to become Sanctuary congregations.

Submitted by:

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March 30, 2016