

## **Resolution: A Response to Executive Order 14169, "Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid," in the Oregon Synod**

**Whereas** The church can speak in society with both a prophetic and pastoral voice. One of the church's missions, given by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, addresses all members, especially the weakest, as being part of the body of Christ, where Paul writes, "If one member suffers, all suffer together with it," and

**Whereas** The mission of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) since its inception was to collaborate with local and national governments, non-governmental organizations, and other partners, to implement programs aimed to foster self-sustaining socioeconomic development, supporting refugee and disaster relief services, and

**Whereas** The yearly financial audits conducted by the Office of Inspector General regarding USAID never reported any substantial compliance issues regarding funds managed by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). This includes Lutheran World Relief (LWR), the ELCA Global Mission, Global Refuge (formerly named the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services) together with Lutheran Services in America (LSA), and

**Whereas** Executive Order 14169 led to the immediate suspension of all existing foreign aid programs, with limited exceptions for emergency food assistance and military aid to Egypt and Israel, and

**Whereas** Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, reacted in a statement released on February 14, 2025. She specified the ELCA's decentralized structure limits the ability of the churchwide organization to take unilateral action on certain issues, so current concerns and fears over the Executive Order cannot be addressed by the ELCA churchwide. Elsewhere in that statement she encouraged churches and synods to continue to speak out in advocacy, and

**Whereas** Lutheran Community Services Northwest (LCSNW) sued the Trump administration. Despite winning a preliminary injunction issued to temporarily block the enforcement of the executive order, the Trump administration sent termination notices to several resettlement agencies, including LCSNW, a day after the court's ruling, and

**Whereas** By enacting the Executive Order, the current administration's intention was to dismantle USAID's refugee support, canceling 83% of existing programs and folding the remaining programs under the State Department, and

**Whereas** This change of responsibility will affect long-term economic development and humanitarian aid over immediate political and diplomatic objectives. This also reduces operational flexibility, perceived neutrality, and bipartisan oversight. Therefore be it

**Resolved** That, in ninety days from adoption of this resolution, the Oregon Synod Council will form a task force consisting of volunteers, willing local leaders, and an assigned, occasional synod staff member. This team will consult with organizing partners and subject matter experts, like Lutheran Community Services Northwest, and engage in a listening season prior to the next Synod Assembly in 2026. During that time the task force will discover and prioritize the ongoing needs and continued support for immigration and disaster relief services in the Oregon Synod, and be it further

**Resolved** that the task force will prepare a second resolution with concrete action plans to be presented at the 2026 Synod Assembly. The task force will also make periodic progress reports to the Oregon Synod Council.

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Signed By: the Rev. Emillie Binja, Creator Lutheran Church, Clackamas, OR; the Rev. John Reutter-Harrah, Synod Staff; the Rev. Solveig Nilsen-Goodin, Resurrection Lutheran Church, Portland, OR; Pastor Craig Johnson, Christ Lutheran Church of Aurora, Oregon; Alison Calsy, Creator Lutheran; Craig Edberg, Creator Lutheran; Debi Stromberg, Creator Lutheran, Gary Schulstad, Creator Lutheran; Patricia Salisbury, Creator Lutheran; Chris Heard, Creator Lutheran; Janet McCullough, Creator Lutheran