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**MEMORIAL TO
THE LOWER SUSQUEHANNA SYNOD
CONCERNING
USHERING IN FULLNESS OF LEADERSHIP IN THE ELCA FOR PEOPLE OF COLOR OR
PRIMARY LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH**

WHEREAS, Project Connect, an initiative of the Eastern Cluster of Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Seminaries consisting of Gettysburg, Philadelphia and Southern seminaries serving Regions 7, 8 and 9, has been endeavoring to strengthen the efforts of the ELCA to encourage young adults (specifically those under the age of 30) to consider that God might be calling them to public ministry in the church; and

WHEREAS, the Multicultural Planning group of Project Connect has identified several factors that inhibit this initiative from effectively strengthening the Ecology of Call in the ELCA as identified in the document, "Is There a Place?", particularly as it pertains to increasing the number of young adults of color in rostered leadership: clergy of color are more likely to be paid below synod guidelines; clergy of color receive lower retirement benefits; clergy of color wait for a first call for significantly greater period than those of European descent; the culture of the ELCA believes that only certain congregations have a mission for ministry in ethnic communities; and

WHEREAS, scripture reminds us that we are all inheritors of God's promises because we know that Christ "has broken down the dividing wall that is the hostility between us... We are no longer foreigners and aliens but fellow citizens with all of God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone" (*Ephesians 2:14,19b-20*); and

WHEREAS, even though the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) made a commitment to be a church comprised of at least 10% people of color by 1998, this church is currently comprised of 98% people of European descent; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA in its social statement, "Freed in Christ: Race Ethnicity and Culture" calls us to treat each other as equals, regardless of ethnic heritage. To do anything else is sin, a violation of God's intention for humanity that fractures and fragments both church and society; and

WHEREAS, studies have shown that any system that allows those of one ethnic heritage to stand at the center and pushes all others to the margins is a form of racism. Those in the position of power not only maintain their privilege and status unconsciously, but all people are pressured into remaining silent about the realities of race relations even in the church (*A Place At The Table An African American Lutheran Preaching from Margins to Mainstream*", thesis submitted to LSTC for DMin in preaching 2007); therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Lower Susquehanna Synod in assembly memorialize the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in assembly to direct the Vocations and Educations Unit of the ELCA in consultation with the Multicultural Ministries Program Unit to conduct a review of recent studies of the factors inhibiting people of color from experiencing the fullness of leadership in this church; and develop action steps and recommendations to address these factors; and report these to the Conference of Bishops and the ELCA Church Council by the end of 2010; and be it further

48 **RESOLVED**, that the Lower Susquehanna Synod in assembly memorialize the ELCA in assembly to direct the
49 Director for Anti-Racism Commitment, Office of the Presiding Bishop of the ELCA, to formulate a model of
50 reconciliation¹ that would be distributed to congregations, synods, and the Churchwide expression for the
51 purpose of abolishing racism by:

- 52 · Confessing and repenting from the sin of racism and its harmful effects on the Body of Christ;
- 53 · Forgiving ourselves for our own culpability and forgiving those who have participated knowingly and
54 unknowingly in the sin of racism;
- 55 · Fostering dialogue between the diverse members of this church and acknowledging the gifts that can be
56 exchanged;
- 57 · Reformulating views on who can serve, at what levels they can serve and in what context they can
58 serve;
- 59 · Providing a forum for leaders of color to communicate to the whole church their “real-life” experiences
60 as it pertains to the Candidacy and Call process in the ELCA for the purpose uncovering the extent to
61 which people of color are excluding from full participation;
- 62 · Accepting the varied expressions of the ELCA practiced throughout the diverse communities of the
63 church as equally valid expressions of the Lutheran faith.

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66 The Rev. John H. Brock
67 Project Connect Discernment Advocate
68 Associate Pastor, Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Camp Hill, PA

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70 Chelle Huth, A.i.M.
71 Youth Director:
72 St. Mark Evangelical Lutheran Church, Mechanicsburg, PA
73 St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, New Cumberland, PA

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¹ Patterned after the **Truth and Reconciliation Committee** formed in South Africa following the abolition of apartheid. This committee was formed to oversee the implementation of the *Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act, 1995*. The act created a framework for the “establishment of as complete a picture possible of the nature, causes and extent of gross violations of human rights committed during the period from 1 March 1960 to the cut-off date contemplated in the Constitution” (*pg 1. of the ACT available online <http://www.doj.gov.za/trc/legal/act9534.htm>*). It allowed victims and victimizers to speak with the promise of reparation and amnesty where necessary/appropriate for the purpose of reconciliation.