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**COMPOSITE RESOLUTION TO
THE LOWER SUSQUEHANNA SYNOD
REGARDING
CALLING FOR A TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY TO CHANGE MINISTRY POLICIES
FROM
THE COMMITTEE OF REFERENCE AND COUNSEL**

10 **WHEREAS**, the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly will consider recommendations from the *Report and*
11 *Recommendations on Ministry Policies* from the Task Force for ELCA studies on Sexuality that affirm the
12 possibility of publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships for pastors and other
13 rostered leaders in the ELCA; and

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15 **WHEREAS**, the Constitutional and Legal Committee of the ELCA Church Council recommended in November
16 that “any motion to come before this Churchwide Assembly regarding changes in this church’s current policy
17 and practice for the rostering of ordained ministers, diaconal ministers, associates in ministry, and deaconesses
18 shall require a two-thirds vote by the assembly for adoption;” and

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20 **WHEREAS**, the ELCA Church Council voted 19-10 to delete this provision and is recommending rules of
21 procedure for the 2009 Churchwide Assembly which would require only a simple majority vote to change
22 ELCA standards to allow pastors and other rostered leaders to be in publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous
23 same-gender relationships; and

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25 **WHEREAS**, 15 Synod Councils asked the ELCA Church Council to change its simple majority proposal to a
26 two-thirds majority vote (Three Synod Councils supported the simple majority recommendation); and

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28 **WHEREAS**, a two-thirds majority of ELCA bishops recommended that a two-thirds majority vote be required
29 on the ministry policies resolutions (March Conference of Bishops vote); and

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31 **WHEREAS**, a two-thirds majority vote is usually required for major decisions including the adoption of an
32 ELCA social statement and for amendments to the ELCA constitution and bylaws, so that such decisions will be
33 accepted by the entire church as legitimate; and

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35 **WHEREAS**, a decision to change church teaching and policy to allow pastors and other rostered leaders to be
36 in publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships holds the potential to be very
37 divisive in many ELCA synods and congregations; and

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39 **WHEREAS**, a two-thirds majority vote would require an overwhelming majority of Churchwide Assembly
40 voting members to make such a significant change to church teaching and practice; and

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42 **WHEREAS**, the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly will adopt its rules for the assembly and could set a two-
43 thirds majority for adoption of any changes to standards for pastors and other rostered leaders; therefore be it

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45 **RESOLVED**, that the Lower Susquehanna Synod Assembly endorse the following provision as an addition to
46 the rules of procedure for the 2009 Churchwide Assembly: “Any motion to come before this Churchwide
47 Assembly regarding changes in this church’s current policy and practice for the rostering of ordained ministers,
48 diaconal ministers, associates in ministry, and deaconesses shall require a two-thirds vote by the assembly for
49 adoption;” and be it further

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51 **RESOLVED**, that this synod urge that the voting members from the Lower Susquehanna Synod present the
52 above addition to the rules of procedure at the time the 2009 Churchwide Assembly considers the rules of
53 procedure for the assembly.

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Composite resolution by the Committee of Reference and Counsel from resolutions adopted by the York Conference, Lebanon Conference, West Cumberland Conference, and North York Conference. These resolutions follow as supporting documentation.

RECOMMENDATION ON RESOLUTION 1:

The Committee of Reference and Counsel recommends the adoption of RESOLUTION 1.

Furthermore the Committee of Reference and Counsel requests that this vote be tallied so as to give additional guidance to the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly.

Marcus Thomsen, chair
Thomas McKee, scribe

May 4, 2009

Adopted