

Resolution 2

Whereas the ELCA upholds the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as being the Word of God and the authoritative guide for life lived in community as baptized children of God;

And whereas there is a diversity of interpretation regarding what the biblical witness has to say regarding same-gender relationships, and that this diversity of interpretation includes persons who believe that biblical prohibitions of same-gender relationships are meant to address promiscuous, exploitative, coercive, or abusive relationships but are not applicable to monogamous, committed, genuinely loving same-gender relationships;

And whereas members of the baptized community who represent the latter perspective still acknowledge the authority of the Holy Scriptures and adhere to the historic creeds of the church and the Lutheran Confessions and therefore are within the parameters of the commonly recognized understanding of Lutheran orthodoxy;

And whereas this diversity of opinion has existed within the ELCA for the 25 years of its existence and has consumed much time, energy, and resources, without either side convincing the other of its interpretation;

And whereas past differences within the church over issues such as slavery, the inclusion of persons of different races, and the ordination of women, wherein people of different opinions have appealed to the Scriptures, this history encourages all of us to have a degree of humility toward those with whom we disagree;

And whereas the decisions of the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly provide us with a way to move forward as a community of the baptized people of God while respecting the differences in interpretation;

And whereas these decisions allow congregations and individuals to express that they are conscience bound to disagree with the decision and therefore are not required to change their practices or beliefs while at the same time open the possibility for congregations who want to be fully inclusive of gays and lesbians as part of their community to recognize same-gender unions and to call a pastor who may be in such a union;

And whereas the South Carolina Synod is not of one mind in this regard and therefore a blanket rejection of the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly decisions would go against the conscience and interpretation of some portion of the synod's members but an acceptance of the decisions would allow all persons to live and practice according to their understanding;

And whereas at least two of our full communion ecumenical partners and several of our partner Lutheran churches in other countries recognize same-gender unions and allow for persons in such unions to serve as ordained pastors and rostered lay professionals;

And whereas there are gay and lesbian persons who are gifted for ministry by God and who desire to live in companionship in ways that are ethical and moral;

Therefore be it resolved that the South Carolina Synod affirm the decisions of the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly as a way the baptized people of God can move forward in ministry while respecting differences in biblical interpretation.

Pr. Mark Cerniglia
Pr. Shannon Mullen
Carol Peecksen
Dallas Shealy, AIM
Pr. James Nichols
Pr. Russ Seabright
Pr. Chris Heavner
Pr. Mary Anderson
Pr. Sandy Jones
Pr. Steve Plonk
Pr. Linda Anderson

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mark Cerniglia". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the list of names.