

A RESOLUTION REGARDING THE BOOK OF FAITH INITIATIVE

WHEREAS, all the baptized when they affirm their baptism promise “to hear the Word of God” and “to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed”; and

WHEREAS, all parents and sponsors covenant to place the Holy Scriptures in the hands of their children and nurture them in faith and prayer; and

WHEREAS, pastors at their ordination vow to be diligent in their study of the Holy Scriptures; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA has begun a *Book of Faith Initiative* inviting everyone to join the conversation, to make a commitment, and to become part of the initiative (see <http://www.elca.org/bookoffaith>); and

WHEREAS, the Holy Scriptures are considered the norm and rule of faith in the Christian life (cf. 2 Tim 3:14-17), providing a foundation for open conversation, spiritual direction, growth and change; and

WHEREAS, the Holy Scriptures have been used throughout history, with good intention, in ways that were either inconsistent with core Lutheran theology and hermeneutics, counter to the up-building of open, grace-centered communities of faith (cf. Gal. 2:11-13) or driven by ideological principles that undermine the central message of the gospel: that all are sinners who fall short of the glory of God and receive salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ - by grace alone and faith alone (Rom. 1-3); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the ELCA-Southeastern Synod become a *Book of Faith* synod, committing ourselves to live in and from the Word of God in all our meetings, assemblies and events, so that as we regularly and increasingly hear, read, study, share and are engaged by God’s Word, we lead by example in faithful service and Christ-centered living; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Bishop of our synod — who “as its pastor, shall be a teacher of the faith of this church and shall provide leadership for the life and witness of this church” — in coordination with the Synod Advocate lead this initiative personally and through collaborative programmatic work with congregations of the synod; and be it further

RESOLVED, that all voting members of this synod assembly covenant together to begin a regular practice of Bible study and prayer, gathering with others in their congregation and/or community to speak and hear the Word from one another; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we celebrate and continue to support and strengthen those places where Scripture is already taught and engaged, such as Women of the ELCA Bible studies, camping and campus ministries, lay schools, congregation councils, Sunday school and other congregational groups; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we encourage all congregations to become *Book of Faith* congregations, which will find expression by

- exploring new opportunities for engaging the Bible,
- sending sufficient numbers of members to synod events for training as Bible study leaders,
- including biblical study as an integral part of all meetings and groups, in order to become more fluent in the first language of faith — the language of Scripture — that we might live our calling as a people Renewed, enlivened, empowered, and sent by the Living Word (cf. The Trinity) that we meet in the Written Word, the Bible.

Recommended by the Synod Council
June 5, 2008