



LCMS **Life** Resolutions

1941–2019



THE
LUTHERAN CHURCH
MISSOURI SYNOD
Life Ministry

INTRODUCTION

Throughout its history, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) has confessed the sacredness of God’s gift of life. We have sought to understand all life issues in light of God’s plan as laid out in Scripture and to confess these truths, even in the face of ever-changing cultural norms. As Paul admonished the church in Ephesus: “Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is” (EPH. 5:15–17).

The following is a compendium of the Synod in convention’s action on life-related topics. The content of these statements is wide-ranging. A 1941 resolution established a Commission on Christian Marriage and the Family in response to “the distraught conditions in world and nation,” which stem from the “disruption of the basic institution of society, the family.” In response to “an upward turn of the divorce rate in our nation,” a 1953 resolution encouraged better education of youth regarding “fellowship and courtship” as well as “homemaking and home keeping.” In 1971, two years before *Roe v. Wade* was passed and in an era of shifting sentiment regarding abortion, Res. 2-39 resolved that “the Synod regard willful abortion as contrary to the will of God,” while “deal[ing] lovingly also with the offense of sinful abortion, ‘for where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.’” A 1973 resolution affirmed Scripture’s teaching that homosexual actions are “intrinsically sinful.” A 2019 resolution, following the legalization of same-sex marriage nationwide by the Supreme Court in 2015, and in a context where “LCMS church workers and laity have asked for guidance in pastoral care” related to these issues, called for a series of actions and studies toward developing resources to aid congregations and schools regarding sexual orientation and gender identity issues.

Other life issues addressed in the following pages include stem cell research, organ donation, human trafficking, domestic and child abuse, mental health, disabilities, euthanasia, and assisted suicide.

In all these things, the LCMS seeks to speak the truth to the church and to the world, encouraging mankind to heed the Word of God and “put off the old self with its practices and . . . put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator” (COL. 3:9–10). Especially where the culture of the day seeks to lead people away from “all that is good and right and true” (EPH. 5:9), the LCMS seeks to encourage her people: “Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience” (EPH. 5:6), but instead “be imitators of God, as beloved children” (EPH. 5:1), and “walk as children of light” (EPH. 5:8).

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Marriage, Life and the Family

1941—Concerning a Commission on Christian Marriage and the Family (Memorial 905)

Whereas, The distraught conditions in world and nation involve, and are largely the result of, disruption of the basic institution of society, the family; and

Whereas, Discussion and inquiry in every level of our own Church indicates perturbation and difficulty in regard to these areas of doctrine and life; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synodical Presidium appoint a Commission on Christian Marriage and the Family, which shall (a) study problems before the Church of today; (b) formulate goals, policies, and objectives for clergy and laity; and (c) devise means, in coordination with the synodical committees or boards on Higher Education, Christian Education, Young People's Work, and Literature, for a constructive approach to these problems and an answer to the demand for assistance in solving them.

Adopted report following:

The Committee recommended that the President of Synod appoint a committee, comprising both pastor of congregations and laymen,

1. To study the entire subject of Christian Marriage and the Family and other problems of Christian life arising out of the changing social order; and
2. To carry on this study in conjunction with the Synodical Committees or Boards on Higher Education, Christian Education, Young People's Work and Literature, for the purposes of coordinating the efforts of all these agencies in developing a rounded program on these subjects; and
3. To report its finding and make recommendations to the next triennial convention of Synod.

1947—To Restudy Problem of Marriage and Divorce

Whereas, The problems which confront the Lutheran congregations in the issue concerning marriage, divorce, remarriage, and related subjects are many and varied; and

Whereas, The lax thinking and practice of the world have made definite inroads into the attitudes and actions of our people; and

Whereas, There appears to be a lack of uniformity of practice among Synod's clergy in these matters; be it therefore

Resolved, That the honorable President of Synod be requested to appoint a committee to study the matters of this subject with the objective of setting forth the doctrines of Holy Writ and their practical application to modern life; and be it further

Resolved, That Synod authorize publication of a manual which shall serve as a guide to pastors and congregations in dealing with these matters.

1950—On Engagement (Memorials 632, 633)

Whereas, Our synodical Catechism reads: "What is marriage? Marriage is the lifelong union of one man and one woman unto one flesh. Marriage was instituted by God and is entered into by rightful betrothal, or engagement." (Question 61) See Matt. 1:19–20, 24.

Whereas, In conformity with the Catechism, the Springfield faculty has declared in an opinion, dated December 19, 1949: "If God instituted the state of marriage, or wedlock, He also instituted the salient part of it the mutual consent or betrothal. . . We are bound by God's Word, therefore, to give as our firm conviction that 'betrothal' and 'marriage' as spoken of in the Word of God, are identical in essence and differ only as does the possession and privileges and their use."

Whereas, the St. Louis faculty contends in an opinion, dated May 26, 1949: that betrothal, or engagement, is "of human origin." It declares in effect that the mutual promise given at a wedding ceremony dare not be broken, except for fornication or malicious desertion, but that the mutual promise given in a rightful betrothal may be broken when "such serious situations should arise as would at once preclude a happy married estate between the betrothed." The St. Louis faculty would therefore grant a dispensation from truce-breaking, where God has not given such dispensation.

Whereas, It is intolerable that the Springfield faculty should teach on thing to some future pastors of our congregations, while the St. Louis faculty teaches the exact opposite to others; therefore be it

Resolved, that we ask The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, in convention assembled at Milwaukee, Wis, June 21 to 30, 1950, to state what it confesses and teaches concerning this matter.

Whereas, Synod's Catechism, Question 61, teaches on the basis of Scripture that "Marriage... is entered into by rightful betrothal, or engagement"; and

Whereas, In harmony with this definition that faculty of out Springfield Seminary has declared (December 19, 1949): "We are bound by God's Word therefore to give as our firm conviction that 'betrothal' and 'marriage', as spoken of in the Word of God, are identical in essence and differ only as does the possession of privileges and their use"; and

Whereas, On the other hand, the faculty of out St. Louis Seminary has asserted (Opinion of May 2, 1949): It is our opinion that betrothal, or engagement, must not be regarded as tantamount to marriage"; therefore be it

Resolved, That we request Synod at its 1950 convention to declare what it holds to be the teaching of the Word of God on engagement, to reject contrary teaching, and to require that any contrary teaching be retracted; and be it further

Resolved, That we request that this overture be printed in the Book of Memorials for the 1950 Convention.

1953—Divorce (Resolution 11)

Whereas, Recent decades have seen an upward turn of the divorce rate in our nation; and

Whereas, Our own Lutheran people are exposed more and more to this general trend; and

Whereas, There has been a noticeable upsurge of divorce in our own Synod; therefore be it

Resolved, That we begin early enough to advise our youth with regard to the importance of Christian fellowship and courtship; and

Resolved, That we in a more realistic and practical manner help prepare our members for Christian homemaking and home keeping through discussion topics and by providing wider opportunities for fellowship with fellow Christians.

1956—Family Life Committee (Resolution 17)

Whereas, The environment and morals of our civilization are such that our people are exposed to more and more dangers which affect the family unit; and

Whereas, The increasing life expectancy presents a challenge to our church not only in the problem of the place of the aged in the family unit and their care but also

in the utilization of a growing number of older members in Kingdom work; therefore be it

Resolved, (a) That Synod commend the Family Life Committee for its efforts thus far to assist pastors and congregations in this important area; and be it further

Resolved, (b) That Synod encourage congregations to increase their services to the individual family, giving particular attention to the new families received, to the families that need special help, and to the growing number of older adults; and be it further

Resolved, (c) That Synod encourage our pastors to help safeguard Christian marriage and strengthen husband-wife relationships through an increased program of marriage education and counseling, and that they use the conference programs and private reading and study to prepare themselves for this part of their professional activity; and be it further

Resolved, (d) That our churches be encouraged to help equip parents for their essential spiritual tasks in child training, making reading materials and group-discussion opportunities available to parents; and be it further

Resolved, (e) That Synod endorse the new program of service to Christian parents made available through the work of the National Lutheran Parent-Teacher League, department of the Lutheran Education Association, and advise congregations to use these helpful new services; and be it further

Resolved, (f) That Synod urge Districts, circuits, and congregations to participate in the Family Life Training Program, as is developed under the Board for Parish Education, in order to improve the local church's ministry to its families; and be it further

Resolved, (g) That Synod encourage our congregations to observe Christian Family Week, the first to the second Sunday of May inclusive (thus broadening the scope of Mother's Day), and that local boards of education use this occasion to evaluate and strengthen the year-round program of winning and serving families for Christ.

1959—Family Life Committee (Resolution 21)

Whereas, There are many forces at work which tend to undermine the Christian home, making it imperative that parents be guided and strengthened in the proper methods of bringing up their children; and

Whereas, The present trend toward marriage at an earlier age increases the necessity for counseling teen-age youth with regard to courtship and marriage; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod encourage every congregation to make specific provision for the guidance of parents through

occasional courses in existing adult Bible classes, through special short-term parent courses, and through parent-teacher discussion groups; and be it further

Resolved, That our congregations be urged to give special attention to preparation for Christian marriage and be encouraged to utilize their youth meetings, parents' meetings, meetings of couples' groups, and other opportunities to give Christian interpretation of marriage and family living and prepare the present generation of young people to establish solidly Christian homes; and be it further

Resolved, That the congregations of the Synod, especially parent groups within our congregations, be encouraged to exercise continuous vigilance regarding offensive literature and other forces threatening Christian marriage and Christian family living, and register judicious and vigorous protest also in co-operation with other community groups against the same; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Family Life Committee be instructed, in consultation with the National Lutheran Parent-Teacher League, to give guidance on national and local levels.

1962—Research Project on Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage, and Related Subjects (Resolution 8-06)

Whereas, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod requested and initiated the study of “marriage, divorce, remarriage, and related subjects” (1947) and instructed the Committee on Marriage and the Family to continue the project; and

Whereas, This committee complied with all the directives of the Synod (1947, 1950, 1953, 1959); and

Whereas, This committee followed the censorial procedures of the Synod which safeguard Scriptural doctrine and the Lutheran Confessions and were assured that its publications are in harmony with the norm established in Article II of the Synod's Constitution; and

Whereas, This committee followed exegetical principles established by past theologians of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod; and

Whereas, The Synod commended and thanked “the authors and the Family Life Committee for their pains taking work in the field of engagement and marriage” (1959) and encouraged the Family Life Committee “to continue its research in the field of marriage and the family”; and

Whereas, The book *Engagement and Marriage* clearly states in its introduction and conclusion that its purpose is not to establish doctrine and practice for the Synod but to present and evaluate all factors involved in research project on engagement; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod recognize the validity of the procedures employed by the Family Life Committee in carrying out the assignments of the Synod; and be it further

Resolved, That the Family Life Committee continue to carry out the assignments given to it by the Synod in 1947, 1950, 1953, and 1959; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod encourage its members to examine and evaluate the findings and conclusions of Engagement and Marriage and Sex and the Church; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod direct requests for formal doctrinal and practical statements regarding entrance into marriage to the Commission on Theology and Church Relations; and be it finally

Resolved, That said commission, after adequate study, report to the Synod.

1989—To Promote Teen Chastity (Resolution 2-16)

Whereas, The problem of teenage pregnancy prior to marriage continues to escalate at alarming rates in the United States; and

Whereas, In many cases these pregnancies result in abortion; and

Whereas, The Bible speaks clearly to both issues of chastity and abortion; and

Whereas, The local congregation provides the best neighborhood location for the dissemination of moral teaching in the context of Gospel proclamation and nurture; therefore be it

Resolved, That the synodical Boards for Youth Services and Social Ministry Services, together with Concordia Publishing House and the Board for Parish Services, redouble efforts at producing materials for teens emphasizing the Biblical warrant for premarital chastity; and be it further

Resolved, That educational/teaching materials against abortion be produced that are explicitly directed at teen agers/youth; and be it further

Resolved, That these boards and agencies promote and encourage with various resources congregational support groups for teenage mothers; and be it finally

Resolved, That existing local models for these ministries be lifted up and supported.

1992—To Encourage Responsible Christian Sexual Behavior (Resolution 7-11A)

Whereas, Sexual activity apart from Christian values is often portrayed in the media as behavior which is acceptable, with the emphasis on “safe sex”; and

Whereas, Surveys indicate increasing numbers of youth and adults engage in sexual activity without consideration of responsibility and accountability to God and others; and

Whereas, Such activity clearly abuses the intent of our Creator who made us male and female for responsible expression of mutual affection within the marriage relationship; and

Whereas, These attitudes and behaviors are an indication of the sexual idolatry of our present day society; and

Whereas, Sinful, selfish choices always bring an ever-increasing pyramid of consequences, such as teen pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, abortion, lack of respect for marriage, and complex issues related to guilt and shame; therefore be it

Resolved, That The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in convention affirm the God-given responsibility of parents, teachers, pastors, and leaders to encourage and teach in every way possible the blessings of reserving sexual relations for marriage; and be it further

Resolved, That we encourage such behavior because it has as its motivation and power our relationship in faith as new creation in Christ Jesus.

1992—To Develop Plan for Ministry to Homosexuals and Their Families (Resolution 3-12A)

Overtures 3-86, 3-88A-C, 3-89A-B, 3-91 (CW, pp. 207–08)

Whereas, Many voices in our society as well as in various church bodies are expressing the view today that homophile behavior is an acceptable alternative lifestyle; and

Whereas, The Word of God clearly condemns homophile behavior in Lev. 18:22, Rom. 1:26–27, and Cor. 6:9; and

Whereas, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in convention in 1973 stated: “That the Synod recognize homophile behavior as intrinsically sinful”; and

Whereas, The Commission on Theology and Church Relations document on *Human Sexuality, Theological Perspective*, states, “Whatever the causes of such condition may be, ... homosexual orientation is profoundly ‘unnatural’ without implying that such person’s sexual orientation is a matter of conscious, deliberate choice. However, this fact cannot be used by the homosexual as an excuse to justify homosexual behavior. As a sinful human being,

the homosexual is accountable to God for homosexual thoughts, words, and deeds.” (*Human Sexuality, Theological Perspective*, p. 35); and

Whereas, The redeeming love of Christ, which rescues humanity from sin, death, and the power of Satan, is offered to all through repentance and faith in Christ, regardless of the nature of their sinfulness; and

Whereas, The need exists to make available a carefully developed Law/Gospel ministry plan to congregations and other institutions in order to minister to those who are troubled by their homosexuality; and

Whereas, It is necessary for the church to expose and resist the sexual idolatry of our society; therefore be it

Resolved, That The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, in convention, reaffirm the position it stated in 1973, “That the Synod recognize homophile behavior as intrinsically sinful”; and be it further

Resolved, That the President of the Synod direct the appropriate boards and commissions to develop a plan for ministry usable by congregations, campus ministries, institutions, and agencies in the Synod, for the purpose of providing biblical and Gospel-oriented ministry to persons troubled by being homophile in their sexual orientations and to their families; and be it finally

Resolved, That the goals to be pursued by such plan for ministry be

1. to offer to our world biblically alternative models of sexual celibacy outside of committed, permanent heterosexual marriage and same-gender social, but not genitally sexual, deep friendships;
2. to confront the individual with his/her sinfulness, and call him/her to repentance;
3. to help the individual recognize that God can rescue individuals from homosexual orientation and practice;
4. to assure him/her of forgiveness in Christ, contingent upon sincere repentance and faith in Christ, and to assure him/her of the love and acceptance of the church;
5. to assist the individual to rely on Christ’s love and strength to abstain from homophile behavior;
6. to help the individual to bear his/her burden without fear of recrimination and rejection by his/her sisters and brothers in Christ;
7. to find ways of ministering to families which include persons of homophile orientation;
8. to do all this patiently, persistently, and compassionately in the love and Spirit of Christ, who says, “Neither do condemn you; go and sin no more.”

1998—To Affirm the Sanctity of Marriage and to Reject Same-Sex Unions (Resolution 3-21)

Whereas, The Sacred Scriptures teach that in the beginning the blessed Trinity instituted marriage to be the life-long union of one man and one woman (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:4–6), to be held in honor by all; and

Whereas, Homosexual unions come under categorical prohibition in the Old and New Testaments (Lev. 18:22, 24; 20:13; 1 Cor. 6:9–20; 1 Tim. 19–10) as contrary to the Creator’s design (Rom. 1:26–27); therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod declare that the same-sex unions are, according to the Scriptures, contrary to the will of the Creator and sin against the commandments of God; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod encourage all its members to give a public witness in word and deed to heterosexual marriage as an estate to be held in honor by all and kept inviolate (Heb. 13:4; 1 Thess. 4:2–5).

2001—To Support Lifelong Sexual Purity (Resolution 6-12)

Whereas, God created mankind as sexual human beings, capable of sexual union for enjoyment as well as procreation in a marriage relationship between one man and one woman (Gen. 1:27a–28, 31; 2:24; Song of Songs 3:1); and

Whereas, The Scriptures clearly teach that the sexual expression of love is to be in a marriage relationship between one man and one woman (Heb. 13:4; the Sixth Commandment, Luther’s Small Catechism, pp. 79–82); and

Whereas, God’s will for His people is to remain sexually pure throughout life (1 Cor. 6:18–20; 1 Cor. 6:9–10; Matt. 5:28); and

Whereas, The sin of cohabitation of unmarried couples has increased 700% over the last ten years; and

Whereas, The church has been mandated to teach all things God has commanded in His Word (Matt. 28:20); and

Whereas, The church has been charged to help its people nurture faith in their homes and families; and

Whereas, Most resources and programs presently available through other church bodies and institutions are filled with Law and very little Gospel, therefore offering no hope and power (John 6:63; Rom. 1:16); and

Whereas, St. Paul reminds God’s people that through faith in Jesus Christ they have resurrection power, making it possible for them to abstain from sexual impurity throughout life (Eph. 1:18–20); therefore be it

Resolved, That The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in convention encourage its churches to study and teach God’s truths about sexuality and sex; and be it further

Resolved, That as a church body we clearly state to the world through available communication channels God’s Word on sex and thus become a “light” in a world filled with darkness on this subject (Matt. 5:14); and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod work with CPH (and/or other auxiliary agencies within the Synod) in developing appropriate programs, resources, and training to equip their people to share these truths about lifelong sexual purity.

2004—To Affirm Marriage as Union of One Man and One Woman (Resolution 3-05A)

Whereas, The LCMS, in convention, in 1973, stated in Res. 2-04 (Proceedings, p. 110): “That the Synod recognize homophile behavior as intrinsically sinful” (Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Rom. 1:24–27); and

Whereas, The Gospel declares that Jesus Christ is the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world (1 John 2:2) and that Christ, who knew no sin, was made to be our sin so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:21); and

Whereas, The church’s proper evangelical work is to proclaim the reconciliation of the sinner to God in the death of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5:18–19); and

Whereas, The Synod, in convention (2001 Res. 2-08A), encouraged its congregations “to minister to homosexuals and their families in a spirit of compassion and humility, recognizing that ‘all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus (Rom. 3:23–24)’”; and

Whereas, Many in American society are demanding legal recognition of same-sex unions as “marriages” by appeals to “equality under the law” (e.g., the Supreme Court of the State of Massachusetts, Feb. 4, 2004); and

Whereas, God gave marriage as a picture of the relationship between Christ and His bride the Church (Eph. 5:32); and

Whereas, Homosexual behavior is prohibited in the Old and New Testaments (Lev. 18:22, 24; 20:13; 1 Cor. 6:9–20; 1 Tim. 1:10) as contrary to the Creator’s design (Rom. 1:26–27); and

Whereas, For our Synod to be silent, especially in the present context, could be viewed as acceptance of the homosexual lifestyle; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod urge its members to give a public witness from Scripture against the social acceptance and legal recognition of homosexual “marriage”; and be it further

Resolved, That in ministering to homosexuals, “A Plan for Ministry to Homosexuals and Their Families,” prepared by the President’s Task Force, be commended as a resource for study and a guide for pastoral care; and be it further

Resolved, That the members of the Synod deal with sexual sins with the same love and concern as all other sins, calling for repentance and offering forgiveness in the Good News of Jesus Christ when there is repentance; and be it further

Resolved, That husbands and wives give thanks to God for the blessings of marriage, lead a chaste and decent life, and each love and honor one’s spouse; and be it finally

Resolved, That the LCMS, in convention, affirm, on the basis of Scripture, marriage as the lifelong union of one man and one woman (Gen. 2:2–24; Matt. 19:5–6).

2007—To Care for Foster and Adoptive Children in a Pure and Undeified Way by Not Placing Children in Morally Ambiguous Contexts (Resolution 6-03A)

Whereas, Even though the Scriptures do not directly address social and political questions concerning the adoption (or foster care) of children, they do call for Christians to care for orphans in a pure and undeified way; and

Whereas, All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God and no sin is intrinsically more sinful than another, yet the Bible does clearly teach that sexual relations outside of marriage, including homosexual practice, are intrinsically sinful (see 1973 Res. 2-04); and

Whereas, The God-given union of husband and wife in marriage “is the only proper context for human procreation” (1983 Res. 3-14) and therefore the divinely intended context for raising children; and

Whereas, The Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) has stated, “On the basis of the clear teaching of Scripture regarding homosexual behavior and about God’s will and design for marriage and the family as foundational units for society as a whole, it is the opinion of the CTCR that a policy of placing adopted or foster children into homosexual contexts would stand in opposition to the official doctrinal position of the LCMS” (May 2, 2006); and

Whereas, Christ died for the sins of all people and forgives repentant people and calls for them to live sanctified lives in accord with His natural law; therefore be it

Resolved, That the members of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod commit themselves to pray for wisdom and guidance for those charged with placing adopted or foster children in light of the challenging circumstances presented to us by a fallen society; and be it further

Resolved, That LCMS World Relief and Human Care be commended for its faithful witness and be encouraged to continue dealing evangelically with this delicate issue; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod express its deepest appreciation for the faithful service of its recognized service organizations in this area; and be it further

Resolved, That LCMS World Relief and Human Care, in consultation with the CTCR, be directed to have ongoing conversation with LCMS recognized service organizations as they continue faithfully to care for children in these difficult situations; and be it finally

Resolved, That LCMS organizations and LCMS recognized service organizations may not knowingly place adopted or foster children into any intrinsically sinful situations where individuals and families are not living in accordance with the Lord’s natural and revealed law (Bylaw 6.2.1).

2013—To Emphasize Biblical Teaching of Sexuality, Marriage, and Family (Resolution 2-07A)

Whereas, “God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them” (Gen. 1:27), which is foundational for all teaching about marriage and family (Matt. 19:4–6); and

Whereas, The earthly relationship between husband and wife is to reflect Christ’s relationship to His bride, the Church (Eph. 5:21–33); and

Whereas, God’s gift of sex is to be used only within the marriage covenant between one man and one woman for the purposes of creating new human life (Gen. 1:27–28), celebrating the unconditional love and commitment between husband and wife (Song of Songs; Matt. 19:4–6) and restraining lust (1 Cor. 7:9); and

Whereas, Scripture is clear that all sexual activity outside of the marriage covenant (e.g., fornication, adultery, sexual co-habitation, polygamy, pornography, pedophilia, prostitution, same-sex intercourse, and all sexual lust) is condemned by God (Lev. 18 & 20; Matt. 19:4–12; Rom. 1:26–32; 1 Cor. 5:1–6:20; 1 Thess. 4:1–8); and

Whereas, The Holy Scriptures teach us that Christ Jesus has borne all the sins of the body upon Himself so that the Church might proclaim the compassionate Lord to all who struggle with every sin of the body and bear witness by her actions of the Lord’s mercy; and

Whereas, President Matthew Harrison has appointed a LCMS task force which, as of its first meeting in February of 2013, decided to call itself “God’s Gift of Sexuality Task Force,” whose purpose is to educate the church and society about Scripture’s teaching regarding sexuality and marriage

as well as to provide biblically sound resources for the church and society; therefore be it

Resolved, That the LCMS in convention encourage the task force in its work; and be it further

Resolved, That the Office of National Mission produce and disseminate Bible-based materials dealing with human sexuality to empower faithful and God-pleasing lives and assist individuals and families struggling with these issues; and be it further

Resolved, That LCMS leaders and congregations continue to seek avenues to proclaim God's truth in all matters of sex and sexuality; and be it further

Resolved, That all Christians be encouraged to proclaim forgiveness in Christ Jesus and show mercy and compassion toward those caught up in any and all sexual sin, and to help those who struggle with these sins and their consequences in their own lives and in the lives of all burdened by these sins; and be it finally

Resolved, That pastors and congregations be encouraged to seek practical ways to show mercy to those who have been caught up in sexual sin, especially through confession, absolution, and restoration to the body of Christ.

2016—To Confess Sanctity of Marriage (Resolution 14-02A)

Whereas, Our triune God, before the fall, created and sanctified marriage as a lifelong union between one man and one woman (Gen. 2:24); and

Whereas, Our Lord Jesus through his presence at the wedding at Cana has affirmed God's original design for marriage (John 2:1–11), and through His teaching has made it clear that the tragedy of divorce is not part of God's original design or intent, but occurs only because of "the hardness of your hearts" (Matt. 19:4–6); and

Whereas, The apostle Paul sees marriage as an icon or reflection of the union that the heavenly Bridegroom Jesus has with His Church (Eph. 5:22–32); and

Whereas, God, not the state, has instituted marriage

- to provide fidelity within the lifelong union of one man and one woman;
- to continue his procreative work of bringing children into the world; and
- to enable a father and mother, in their household, to "bring up their children in the fear and instruction of the Lord so that they may offer Him their praise" (*Lutheran Service Book [LSB]*, p. 275). Therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod, on the basis of Holy Scripture, joyfully confess marriage to be an unalterable estate which

God continues to uphold and bless within the human community; and be it further

Resolved, That The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) commend the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) 1981 report, *Human Sexuality: A Theological Perspective*, as a faithful explication of timeless truths of the Word of God; and be it further

Resolved, That the LCMS in convention encourage its seminaries, universities, and schools to place a high priority on equipping their students to articulate the biblical view of marriage and provide resources for the church through continuing education, conferences on marriage, publications, and other resources; and be it further

Resolved, That pastors be implored to provide responsible care in this area through their preaching, teaching, counseling, and administration of the Sacraments; and be it further

Resolved, That congregations and commissioned workers be implored to provide care through teaching, counseling, and acts of mercy; and be it further

Resolved, That we, as God's baptized children living in this broken world, live out our vocation as people shaped by God's Word and His forgiving love to respond with mercy to those whose lives have been wounded by sin; and be it finally

Resolved, That as a Synod we continue to speak prophetically with gentleness and respect of God's institution and preservation of marriage as it is reflected in creation, even as we also give thanks to God for His indescribable gift of the one-flesh union between one man and one woman.

2016—To Respond Compassionately to Challenges to Biblical View of Marriage and Human Sexuality (Resolution 14-03A)

Whereas, Before mankind's fall into sin, God created the estate of marriage (Gen. 1:27–28; Gen. 2:18–26) "for the mutual companionship, help, and support that each person ought to receive from each other, that man and woman may find delight in one another and for the procreation of children" (*Lutheran Service Book [LSB]*, p. 275); and

Whereas, After mankind's fall into sin, Jesus affirms that in the beginning God created marriage as the union of one man and one woman (Matt. 19:3–9); and

Whereas, "In marriage we see a picture of the communion between Christ and His bride, the church" (*LSB*, p. 275; Eph. 5:22–33); and

Whereas, The Supreme Court of the United States has ruled that marriages may be contracted between two persons of the same sex; and

Whereas, Such unions destroy the picture of Christ's love for the Church and are a matter of grave offense before God (Rom. 1:26–27; 1 Cor. 6:9–11; 1 Tim. 1:8–11); therefore be it

Resolved, That 2016 LCMS convention affirm and faithfully confess the biblical truth that marriage is God's creation, the exclusive union of one man and one woman; and be it further

Resolved, That the convention affirm and faithfully confess that same-sex marriage is contrary to Scripture and to God's design for His creation and in no way fulfills God's intention to bless His children through holy marriage; and be it further

Resolved, That the pastors of the Synod continue to deal compassionately with those who experience same-sex attraction through the proclamation of the Law and Gospel and the administration of Baptism, corporate and individual Confession and Absolution, and the Lord's Supper; and be it further

Resolved, That the pastors of the Synod continue to deal compassionately with the family, friends, and all others impacted by those who struggle with same-sex attraction or those involved in same-sex relationships, through the proclamation of the Law and Gospel and the administration of Baptism, corporate and individual Confession and Absolution, and the Lord's Supper; and be it further

Resolved, That congregations be encouraged to utilize current LCMS resources such as the following Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) documents: *Human Sexuality: A Theological Perspective*, *Response to Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust*, and *The Creator's Tapestry: Scriptural Perspectives on Man-Woman Relationships in Marriage and the Church*; and be it further

Resolved, That the CTCR be directed to update the document *Human Sexuality* (1981) in order to address current challenges to the estate of marriage; and be it finally

Resolved, That the LCMS in convention direct the Office of National Mission, Concordia Publishing House, and the two seminaries of our Synod to provide resources that enable the church to confess the truth boldly and deal compassionately with those who struggle with same-sex attraction and those who care for them.

2019—To Support Marriage, Life, and Family (Resolution 1-06A)

Whereas, “God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them,” (Gen. 1:27) and brought them together thereby instituting

holy marriage between a man and a woman (Gen. 2:21–24; Matt. 19:4–7; Eph. 5:22–33); and

Whereas, God's will for the married man and woman is clearly stated, “Be fruitful and multiply ...” (Gen. 1:28), thus perpetuating the gift of life; and

Whereas, Marriage and life lead to family for God's Word to spread: “You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul ... You shall teach them to your children ...” (Deut. 11:18a, 19a); and

Whereas, The marriage rite from *Lutheran Service Book* reminds us:

- Marriage is an honorable estate instituted and blessed by God in Paradise, before humanity's fall into sin
- In marriage we see a picture of the communion of Christ and His bride the Church
- Marriage and family are to be confessed and taught in the church in accordance with the purposes for which it was instituted by God for the benefit of both church and society
- The union of husband and wife in heart, body, and mind is intended by God for mutual companionship, help, and support that each person ought to receive from the other, both in prosperity and adversity
- Marriage was also ordained by God so that man and woman may find delight in one another and thus avoid sexual immorality
- God also established marriage for the procreation of children, where and when He wills; and

Whereas, Marriage is the foundation for family and the care and nurture of children; and

Whereas, Marriage, life, and family are inextricably linked, as Dr. Martin Luther emphasized and taught on the household estate, and the family vocations of husband and wife, father, mother, and child were a key insight of the Reformation; and

Whereas, The Synod in the 2016 convention Resolved (Res. 16-02A, Proceedings, 253–54) to add a seventh Synod mission priority, “Strengthen and support the Lutheran family in living out God's design,” effectively launching the Office of National Mission's (ONM) Lutheran Family Initiative; and

Whereas, The Synod has commended the essay entitled, “Marriage, Life and Family: Reflecting the Holy Trinity,” by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and the booklet, *A Small Catechism on Human Life*, by John Pless, as well as other excellent resources further demonstrating these three—marriage, life and family—should be treated and defended together; and

Whereas, The Synod's publishing arm, Concordia Publishing House (CPH), has produced a wealth of materials in this area, e.g.: *Your Marriage by God's Design; Grounded in God's Word: Commentaries on Life Issues; The Lutheran Difference: Marriage and Family; Five Things You Can Do to Make Your Marriage Stronger; Made for Each Other: Newlywed Resource; Ethics of Sex: From Taboo to Delight; United in Christ: Preparation for Christian Marriage; Devoted to God and Each Other; Together is Better: Marriage Devotions and Activities; Hello My Name is Single; Commitment: God's Plan for Engagement and Marriage* (high school curriculum); *Without This Ring: Surviving Divorce; Changing Currents: The Bible and Same-Sex Marriage; Five Things You Can Do to Have a Stronger Family; Family Trees and Olive Branches: Creating a Culture of Grace in Your Family; Renewing the Family Spirit; Blessings and Prayers for Parents; Faithfully Parenting Pre-Schoolers; Faithfully Parenting Tweens; Faithfully Parenting Teens; Sexuality Mentality: Creating a Culture of Biblical Integrity; Learning About Sex* (sex education curriculum); *Sexual Morality in a Christless World; In the Image of God: Gender and Sexual Identity*; and many others; and

Whereas, Sin, the world, and Satan are clearly attacking marriage and the family by seeking to sever the bond between husbands and wives, and also between parents and children; and

Whereas, Murder is condemned by the Fifth Commandment (including abortion, infanticide, physician-assisted suicide, and euthanasia); and

Whereas, There are moral and ethical implications surrounding contraception, assistive reproductive technologies, and related research; and

Whereas, There is increased cultural acceptance of gender confusion leading to a denial of one's own God-given sexuality and ever-new anti-Scriptural categories for "gender identity," further eroding God's design for marriage; and

Whereas, These assaults against marriage and life are undermining the family and causing harm to society; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod rejoice in the truth that the Lord Jesus Christ has promised to be with His Church until the end of the age, not simply to sustain us, but through the means of grace to bless us; as we call on His name to help marriage, life, and the family (John 14:14); and be it further

Resolved, That the ONM implement the seventh mission priority by boldly promoting the biblical and crucial relationship between marriage, life, and family by generating resources and strategies which counter the cultural assaults against these while also encouraging,

uplifting, and equipping the Body of Christ in all three areas; and be it further

Resolved, That the ONM offer resources to districts for the development and equipping of district marriage, life, and family coordinators; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod direct the ONM to work diligently with our recognized service organizations, the Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty, Lutherans For Life, and other appropriate entities to coordinate in upholding and defending the link between marriage, life, and family; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod direct the ONM, CPH, the seminaries and universities, and the Commission on Theology and Church Relations to provide resources that help the families of our Synod and enable the church to confess the biblical teaching on marriage, life, and family.

2019—To Encourage Faithfulness regarding Marriage (Resolution 11-02A)

Whereas, By confessing the truth of marriage, we confess God as the one who created us male and female (Gen. 1:27); and

Whereas, Christ Himself affirmed the truth of marriage, saying, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh? ... What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate'" (Matt. 19:4–6 ESV); and

Whereas, God established marriage for the procreation of children who are to be brought up in the fear and instruction of the Lord so that they may offer Him their praise (Rite of Holy Matrimony, *Lutheran Service Book*, 275; Gen. 1:28; Psalm 127; Deut. 6:4–9; Eph. 6:4); and

Whereas, Our confession of true marriage is tied to our confession of Christ and his bride the church (Eph. 5:22–33); and

Whereas, God forbids adultery; sexual relations outside of marriage; and divorce, except for marital unfaithfulness or malicious abandonment (Ex. 20:14; 1 Cor. 7:10–11, 15; Mark 10:6–12; Matt. 5:27–28; 1 Thess. 4:3–5; 1 Cor. 6:9–10); and

Whereas, The Scriptures also clearly teach that homosexual acts are intrinsically sinful and violate both revealed and natural law (Rom. 1:18–32); and

Whereas, Cultural attacks on marriage have resulted in such problems as high rates of divorce, the dissolution of families, and widespread sexual relations outside of marriage; and

Whereas, Public opinion, popular culture, and government actions and decisions cannot change what God has established; and

Whereas, In the face of the virulent opposition to God's institution of marriage that is rife in America in these times, faithfulness to the Bible's teaching carries with it the prospect of social and economic costs; therefore be it

Resolved, That The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) reaffirm its commitment to the biblical definition of marriage as the lifelong union of one man and one woman and to Luther's explanations of the Sixth Commandment and First Article in both his Small and Large Catechisms; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod in convention reaffirm 2016 Resolution 14-02A, "To Confess the Sanctity of Marriage," and that same-sex "marriage" cannot be recognized as marriage according to God's institution; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod teach and confess the Scriptural doctrine and practice of marriage with renewed effort, in the conviction that "what God has joined together, let not man separate" (Matt 19:6); and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod continue to teach that this understanding of marriage is incompatible with any sort of sexual relations outside of marriage or the practice of unscriptural divorce; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod encourage its members and the members of its congregations to remain faithful to the biblical teaching regarding marriage even when they experience negative and hostile reactions to such faithful confession; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod give thanks for all those who have publicly spoken in support of God's institution of marriage; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod pledge its support by prayer and all other appropriate means to those in this country and elsewhere who are persecuted for their adherence to the biblical teaching of marriage; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod make every effort to commend, uphold, and encourage all Christians in our midst who are seeking to live a chaste life even in the face of great sexual temptations from the devil, the world, and their sinful flesh; and be it finally

Resolved, That the church would be a welcome place for all people and would continue to proclaim Christ the friend of sinners, that all people would be called to repentance and that the repentant would be absolved, and that all people would be called to find their identity in Christ alone (1 Cor. 6:9–11).

Abortion/Beginning of Life

1971—To State Position on Abortion (Resolution 2-39)

Whereas, Life comes into being by an act that shares in the creation power of God Himself; and

Whereas, Human life is designed to inherit eternal life; and

Whereas, Life and death belong to the providence of God, and no person has the right to extinguish human life by decision of his own, made apart from general precepts that express God's will; and

Whereas, The children of God are living in fallen world; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod regard willful abortion as contrary to the will of God; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod recognize that in fallen world it becomes necessary at times to choose between one life and another; and be it further

Resolved, That if such choice must be made by the children of God, they do so recognizing that it is neither our motives nor the necessity that justifies them before God, but only the grace and forgiveness of God in Christ Jesus; and be it finally

Resolved, That the members of the Synod remember to deal lovingly also with the offense of sinful abortion, "for where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." (Rom. 5:20)

1979—Position on Abortion (Resolution 3-02A)

Whereas, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod throughout its history has opposed abortion and since 1971 has spoken in convention to condemn "willful abortion as contrary to the will of God"; and

Whereas, We as members of Christian congregations have the obligation to protest this heinous crime against the will of God legally sanctioned in the United States and other lands; and

Whereas, The practice of abortion, its promotion, and legal acceptance are destructive of the moral consciousness and character of the people of any nation; therefore be it

Resolved, That The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in convention urgently call upon Christians—

1. To hold firmly to the clear Biblical truths that (a) the living but unborn are persons in the sight of God from the time of conception (Job 10:9–1; Ps. 51:5; 139:13–17; Jer. 1:5; Luke 1:41–44); (b) as persons the unborn stand under the full protection of God's own prohibition against murder (Gen. 9:6; Ex. 20:13; Num. 35:33; Acts 7:19; John 3:15); and (c) since abortion takes human life, abortion is not a moral option, except as tragically unavoidable byproduct of medical procedures necessary to prevent the death of another human being, viz., the mother; and
2. To speak and act as responsible citizens on behalf of the living but unborn in the civic and political arena to secure for these defenseless persons due protection under the law; and
3. To offer as an alternative to abortion supportive understanding, compassion, and help to the expectant parents) and family, and to foster concern for unwanted babies, encouraging Lutheran agencies and families to open hearts and homes to their need for life in family; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod earnestly encourage its pastors, teachers, officers, and boards—

1. To warn publicly and privately (Prov. 31:8–9) against the sin of abortion;
2. To instruct the community of God that abortion is not in the realm of Christian liberty, private choice, personal opinion, or political preference;
3. To nurture a deep reverence and gratitude for God's gracious gift of human life;
4. To oppose in responsible way attitudes and policies in congregations, schools, hospitals, Lutheran social service agencies, and other institutions within their sphere of influence and work which suggest that abortion is a matter of personal choice;
5. To support the efforts of responsible pro-life groups in their communities, e.g., "Lutherans for Life" (CTCR Report, CW, p. 74);
6. To promote clear instruction of Christian morality in homes, schools, and churches of the Synod, showing the blessings and safeguards inherent in God's will

for sexual chastity before marriage and faithfulness in marriage;

7. To teach within our Lutheran schools and churches the biological, social, and parental functions of childbearing; and
8. To support the efforts to secure the Human Life Amendment to the United States Constitution.

1983—To Reaffirm and Implement the Synod's Pro-Life Position (Resolution 3-04B)

Whereas, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has consistently taken strong position in support of “human life and in opposition to willful abortion” (Res. 2-39, 1971, Milwaukee; Res. 3-08C, 1977, Dallas; Res. 3-02A, 1979, St. Louis; Res. 3-02, 1981, St. Louis); and

Whereas, In the two years since the 1981 synodical convention an additional two and one-half million lives have been destroyed through legalized abortion; and

Whereas, Instances of infanticide have been reported at an increasing rate, in which newborn children with motor or mental disabilities are permitted to die by the denial or ordinary care provided babies, born without such problems; and

Whereas, Complications—physical, emotional, and spiritual—arising from abortions have been documented in both women and men; and

Whereas, There is an urgent need for the congregations and agencies of the Synod, in view of recent Supreme Court decisions reaffirming the 1973 position on legalizing abortion, to receive encouragement and materials from the Synod which will sensitize them their Christian responsibility with reference to pro-life concerns and which will provide guidance for the public witness of the Synod's opposition to willful abortion; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod reaffirm its position that (a) the living but unborn are persons in the sight of from the time of conception (Job 10:9–11; Ps. 51:5, 139:1–17; Jer. 1:5; Luke 1:41–44); (b) as persons the unborn stand under the full protection of God's own prohibition against murder (Gen. 9:6; Ex. 20:13; Num. 35:33; 7:19; John 3:15); and (c) since abortion takes human life, abortion is not a moral option, except as tragic unavoidable byproduct of medical procedures necessary to prevent the death of another human being, viz., mother” (1979 Res. 3-02A); and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod repeat its instruction program boards and instruct them to give high priority to the preparation of materials for all age levels in church which present the Synod's opposition on the basis of the Scriptures to willful abortion (1981 Res. 3-02); and be it further

Resolved, That the Board for Parish Services prepare and distribute to all congregations materials suitable for the observance of the annual Life Sunday the third Sunday in January (January 15, 1984) which stress the sanctity of life for all human beings regardless of age or condition; and be it further

Resolved, That the Board for Social Ministry Services be directed to develop proposals by which congregations might help expectant parents and families, might encourage adoption for those who may regard abortion as their only option, and might provide supportive services for those experiencing an untimely pregnancy; and be it further

Resolved, That the Board for Youth Services develop new materials regarding premarital relationships, abortion, and adoption that are pertinent to our youth society today; and be it further

Resolved, that the Synod direct its appropriate officials (synodical President, District Presidents, boards, and commissions, etc.) to communicate formally the official position of the Synod against willful abortion to all clergymen, social service agencies, auxiliaries, and hospitals associated with the LCMS, and that those officials do all in their power to see to it that they take clear and forthright stand against willful abortion by all associated with the Synod, so that the witness given to the world demonstrates the commitment of the LCMS to provide protection and care for the living but unborn; and be it further

Resolved, That all members of the LCMS be reminded of their privilege and responsibility to apply Law and Gospel properly as they offer compassionate counsel to all those troubled by matters pertaining to abortion; and be it finally

Resolved, That The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod commend Lutherans for Life for its clear witness in behalf of sanctity of life, also the unborn, and that we encourage the members of the Synod to support its efforts.

1989—To Address Recent Developments and Continued Concerns on Pro-life Issues (Resolution 3-09A)

Whereas, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has urgently called upon Christians to “hold firmly to the clear Biblical truths that

- (a) the living but unborn are persons in the sight of God from the time of conception (Job 10:9–11; Ps. 51:5, 139:13–17; Jer. 1:5; Luke 1:41–44);
- (b) as persons the unborn stand under the full protection of God's own prohibition against murder (Gen. 9:6; Ex. 20:13; Num. 35:33; Acts 7:19, 1 John 3:15); and

- (c) since abortion takes human life, abortion is not a moral option, except as tragically unavoidable byproduct of medical procedures necessary to prevent the death of another human being, viz., the mother (1979 Proceedings, Res. 3-02A); and

Whereas, The Supreme Court of the United States has signaled the end of abortion on demand by its ruling in the case of *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services, Inc.*, in allowing governmental authorities greater latitude in protecting human life from the time of conception; and

Whereas, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has prayerfully and earnestly sought such actions through convention resolutions, citizen petition and participation, and the submission of an amicus curiae brief to the Supreme Court; and

Whereas, There continue to be developments in the area of the life sciences that cause concern; therefore be it

Resolved, That The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod reaffirm its position that “abortion is not a moral option except as tragically unavoidable byproduct of medical procedures necessary to prevent the death of another human being, viz., the mother” (1979 Proceedings, Res. 3-02A); and be it further

Resolved, That The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod welcomes the Supreme Court’s *Webster* decision as a necessary first step toward the full restoration of the right to life; and be it further

Resolved, That we call upon all members of the Synod to seek out all legal opportunities for extending the fullest protection of law for human life from the time of conception until natural death; and be it further

Resolved, That the Commission on Theology and Church Relations continue to monitor and study various life-related issues, such as spiritual consequences to an aborted child, to the child’s parents, and to those in complicity with the act of unjust killing; the use of abortifacient drugs; eugenic experimentation in human biology; the use of tissues taken from intentionally aborted fetuses, and advise the church on these issues so that we all might act responsibly according to the Word of God; and be it further

Resolved, That pastors and church professionals be encouraged to avail themselves of resources such as the training workshops that are cosponsored by the LCMS Sanctity of Human Life Task Force, Lutherans for Life, and various Lutheran social-ministry organizations to provide clinical skills for the diagnosis and treatment of post-abortion stress disorder; and be it finally

Resolved, That the members of LCMS congregations be encouraged to support Lutherans for Life.

1992—To Promote Greater Activity in Support of Scripture’s Pro-Life Position (Resolution 3-10)

Whereas, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has urgently called upon Christians to “hold firmly to the clear biblical truths that

- (a) the living but unborn are persons, in the sight of God from the time of conception (Job 10:9–11; Ps. 51:5, 139:13–17; Jer. 1:5; Luke 1:41–44);
- (b) as persons the unborn stand under the full protection of God’s own prohibition against murder (Gen. 9:6; Ex. 20:13; Num. 35:33; Acts 7:19; John 3:15); and
- (c) since abortion takes human life, abortion is not a moral option, except as tragically unavoidable byproduct of medical procedures necessary to prevent the death of another human being, viz., the mother” (Res. 3-02A, 1979 Proceedings); and

Whereas, The Supreme Court of the United States has signaled the possible end of abortion on demand by its ruling in the case of *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services, Inc.*, in allowing governmental authorities, particularly state and local governments, greater latitude in deciding human life issues from the time of conception; and

Whereas, The LCMS has prayerfully and earnestly sought such actions through convention resolutions, citizen petition and participation, and the submission of amicus curiae briefs to the Supreme Court as recently as 1991; and

Whereas, There continue to be developments in the life sciences (e.g., experimental use of fetal tissue and early detection of unwanted genetic traits) that signal the prospect of ongoing concerns beyond the present abortion law crisis, underscoring the increasing pressures brought to bear on decisions to undergo an abortion affecting the people of our society; therefore be it

Resolved, That the pastors of the LCMS be encouraged to provide strong leadership in reaffirming the LCMS position of sanctity of life and to help those who suffer from stress due to variety of causes leading to consideration of abortion, and to provide counsel for those who face the tragic reality of post-abortion syndrome; and be it further

Resolved, That we call upon all members of our Synod, via this convention, to bear witness boldly to our pro-life position; and be it further

Resolved, That we encourage all congregations to place life issues under the auspices of congregational committee, working with pro-life resource and contact person to become better informed about all aspects surrounding the issue of abortion, to observe an annual Life Sunday, and seek out all opportunities for extending the fullest

protection of law for all human life from the time of conception until natural death and exercise those opportunities in responsible manner; and be it further

Resolved, That each Circuit of our Synod be encouraged to establish an active Lutherans for Life group, thereby availing themselves of resources to promote the principles of human life; and be it finally

Resolved, That our Synod continue to be strong advocate for the protection of human life, for the improvement of its quality, and for the safety of defenseless human beings of all ages endangered by the current carelessness and ruthless selfishness of our society.

1995—To Affirm Sanctity of Life Position (Resolution 6-01B)

Whereas, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod by synodical and District convention actions has repeatedly expressed its concerns and its position regarding developments in our society which have resulted in the disregard and denial of the clear teaching of the Holy Scriptures regarding the sanctity of all human life beginning at conception; and

Whereas, These developments have led to equally tragic actions by others whose use of violence resulted in physical harm and the destruction of human life; and

Whereas, Lutherans for Life has represented very ably the interests of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod by providing encouragement and education regarding the principle of the sanctity of human life; and

Whereas, Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Task Force on the Sanctity of Life has existed for over decade and President's Commission on the Sanctity of Life has been appointed, both of which exist to promote distinct and vigorous LCMS effort to honor and uphold the sanctity of all human life; therefore be it

Resolved, That in the face of new societal threats and assaults upon this clear teaching of the Holy Scriptures, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod again go on record reiterating and underscoring its unwavering position regarding the sanctity of human life; and be it further

Resolved, That The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod also go on record as deploring, renouncing, and repudiating in the strongest terms any use of violence as means of protest; and be it further

Resolved, That The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod enthusiastically support the efforts of the Board for Human Care Ministries, the LCMS Task Force on the Sanctity of Life, the CTCR, the President's Commission on the Sanctity of Life, Lutherans for Life, and all other proper efforts

to educate church and society regarding the important considerations associated with life issues; and be it further

Resolved, That Districts, congregations, pastors, teachers, and lay leaders be encouraged to use every opportunity to affirm the Synod's pro-life stand to their members and encourage the use of appropriate pro-life materials; and be it further

Resolved, That the members of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod be encouraged to boldly exercise their responsibility as Christian citizens to influence legislation for the protection of all human life; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod encourage its congregations to commit themselves to active, nonviolent promotion and defense of the sanctity of all human life; and be it finally

Resolved, That pastors and congregations be encouraged to minister evangelically, through Law and Gospel, to those who support position contrary to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures regarding the sanctity of human life.

1998—To Reaffirm Sanctity of Human Life (Resolution 6-02)

Whereas, After a quarter of a century abortion continues to be a legal choice in the United States for women who want to terminate an unwanted pregnancy, although the Holy Scriptures clearly teach that this killing of the unborn is an abomination to the Lord (Gen. 9:6; Prov. 6:16–17); and

Whereas, Partial-birth abortion remains a legal choice for late-term abortions; and

Whereas, The legalization of assisted suicide is being promoted throughout the country; and

Whereas, God is the Author and Perfecter of life, and it is within His wisdom to judge its quality and effectiveness; therefore be it

Resolved, That The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in convention reaffirm its historic position on the sanctity of life; and be it further

Resolved, That The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod denounce partial-birth abortion as a barbaric procedure; and be it further

Resolved, That The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod reject the legalization of assisted suicide; and be it finally

Resolved, That the congregations and schools of the Synod proclaim the sanctity of human life through the teaching and preaching ministry.

1998—To Affirm Life and Oppose Abortion on Demand (Resolution 3-14)

Whereas, God our heavenly Father is the Author and Creator of all life (Gen. 1 and John 1:1–3); and

Whereas, Many unborn children, whom God has woven together in their mothers' wombs (Ps. 139:13–16) are being slain through abortion on demand, including through the inhumane partial-birth abortion procedure; and

Whereas, The developing field of fetal tissue research may create new pressures and incentives for abortion on demand or even harvesting fetal tissue for use in research in developing technologies; and

Whereas, We are called to speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves (Prov. 31:8), and to love them as ourselves (Matt. 19:18–19; Luke 10:27; John 13:34–35; 15:17; Rom. 13:10); and

Whereas, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has shown a consistent commitment to the sanctity of human life (convention resolutions 1995—6-01A, 1989—3-09A, 1983—3-04B, 1981—3-02, 1979—3-02A); therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention encourage its congregations, pastors, teachers and lay people to use every opportunity to confess openly our Synod's biblical prolife stand and completely reject the inhumane treatment of unborn children through "willful abortion" (1979 Res. 302A); and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod understand the biblical prohibition of "willful abortion" to include abortion for the purpose of fetal tissue research and fetal tissue transplantation; and be it further

Resolved, That the congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod be encouraged to put their commitment to Christ and the unborn into action with physical and financial support for lawful prolife activities and prolife organizations such as Lutherans for Life; and be it finally

Resolved, That the congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod be encouraged to reach out to those who find themselves in a crisis pregnancy and those families confronted with decisions about fetal tissue transplantation with the same love, mercy, and grace that Christ Himself extended to us.

2001—To Reiterate Synod's Stance on Abortion (Resolution 6-02A)

Whereas, The Bible clearly states that the child in the mother's womb is a living human being (Jer. 1:5; Ps. 139:16; Is. 49:1, 5; and Luke 1:41, 44); and

Whereas, Elective abortion is a sin, as it is a violation of God's command that "You shall not murder"; and

Whereas, The Christian church has historically stated its stance regarding abortion dating back to the early church fathers; and

Whereas, Martin Luther's *Small Catechism* states that Christians are not to "hurt nor harm our neighbor, but help and support him in every need," which includes the child in the womb; and

Whereas, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has historically voiced its strong support of defenseless human life from conception and continues to speak out concerning the sin of abortion; and

Whereas, The introduction of RU-486, along with other drugs and procedures, has made it easier to take the life of children in the womb while strengthening and perpetuating the myth in our culture that the unborn child is not worthy of life or protection; and

Whereas, Too often pastors, church workers, parishioners, and those in the LCMS who are in positions of public responsibility have faltered in defense of the unborn; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention reaffirm its historic position on the sanctity of life; and be it further

Resolved, That the synodical President send a letter to the President of the United States of America on behalf of the Synod, requesting a thorough review and reversal of the decision made by the Federal Food and Drug Administration regarding RU-486 and its use in the killing of unborn children; and be it further

Resolved, That pastors, church workers, parishioners, and those in the LCMS who are in positions of public responsibility be encouraged to work in every way possible (i.e. adoption, legislation, public preaching and teaching, crisis centers support, etc.) locally and nationally to end abortion in this country; and be it further

Resolved, That pastors and synodical officials be encouraged to deal evangelically in accordance with Matthew 18 and the appropriate Bylaws in the case of those who reject this biblical truth; and be it finally

Resolved, That we work together as brothers and sisters in Christ in a fraternal, evangelical, and loving spirit actively to proclaim the forgiveness that Christ won for us on the cross to those who have been brought to repentance for having supported or experienced abortion.

2004—To Encourage Congregations to Establish and/or Support Pregnancy Care Centers (Resolution 6-08)

Whereas, A strong pro-life position cares not only for babies whose lives are in danger but also for mothers whose situations are difficult; and

Whereas, Many pregnancy care centers offer physical, financial, emotional, and spiritual care for the mother; and

Whereas, Many pregnancy care centers offer abstinence and post-abortion counseling for both males and females; therefore be it

Resolved, That LCMS congregations be encouraged to establish and/or support local pregnancy care centers that reflect our strong pro-life position.

2004—To Call Upon Board for Human Care Ministries to Review Birth-Control Products (Resolution 6-10)

Whereas, God is the Creator and Giver of All Life; and

Whereas, Life begins at conception; and

Whereas, We are not to take the life of another but, rather, to leave that in God's hands; and

Whereas, Some abortifacients which destroy the embryo or prevent its implantation in the uterine wall have been mislabeled as contraceptives; and

Whereas, Some birth control pills thin the uterine wall so that if conception does take place the embryo will not be able to implant, resulting in an early abortion; and

Whereas, Contraception is commonly practiced, but its workings are not well understood by many; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Board for Human Care Ministries review the various birth control products, clarifying which ones act sometimes or all the time as abortifacients; and be it further

Resolved, That this information be made available to pastors and laypeople of the LCMS.

2010—To Be a Light for Life (Resolution 6-02A)

Whereas, The Bible clearly states that the child in a mother's womb is a living human being (Jer. 1:5; Ps. 139:16; Is. 49:1, 5; Luke 1:41, 44); and

Whereas, The Fifth Commandment, "You shall not murder," along with the Small Catechism's explanation "not to hurt nor harm our neighbor, but help and support him in every physical need" celebrate God's gift of life; and

Whereas, Christians are called "to speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves" (Prov. 31:8-9); and

Whereas, The "Mexico City Policy" has been rescinded by executive order, allowing for the use of federal tax dollars to fund abortions outside the United States; and

Whereas, Recent national health care legislation ("Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act"—March 30, 2010) has raised a number of concerns regarding the use of federal funds for abortions; therefore be it

Resolved, That with one voice the LCMS in convention denounce any legislation or action that supports or funds abortions; and be it further

Resolved, That all LCMS congregations be encouraged to work at the grassroots level with local crisis pregnancy centers; and be it further

Resolved, That the LCMS commend the work of Lutherans For Life and LCMS Life Ministries, and encourage the Synod's congregations, pastors, and congregational members to affirm the sanctity of life; and be it further

Resolved, That Synod maintain the LCMS Sanctity of Human Life Committee and LCMS Life Ministries regardless of the outcome of Synod restructuring; and be it finally

Resolved, That a conference be convened by the LCMS Sanctity of Human Life Committee that will provide encouragement to all LCMS members currently involved in elective and legislative processes and help them to be more vocal about pro-life issues, and that will equip and encourage more LCMS members to become involved in the governmental process of our country.

2016—To Create Task Force for Study of Issues Relating to Procreation, Fertility, and Care for Unborn (Resolution 3-04)

Whereas, The triune God, the Author and Creator of life, defines human life as being present from the moment of conception (Ps. 139:13-14; Matt. 1:20; Luke 2:21); and

Whereas, Children are a blessing from the Lord (Ps. 127:3, 5); and

Whereas, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) is committed to upholding the sanctity of human life from the time of conception; and

Whereas, The LCMS, through LCMS Life Ministry, provides resources to the church regarding the sanctity of human life; and

Whereas, There are a multiplicity of options regarding procreation, fertility, and care of the unborn (e.g., contraception, procreative alternatives, reproductive assistance, and even abortion); and

Whereas, At the least, a partial causal factor of this multiplicity of options has been continually new and rapidly emerging developments in science and technology; and

Whereas, Christians are seeking guidance from the church based on the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions regarding the use of contraception, in vitro fertilization (IVF), other reproductive technologies, and the use of aborted fetal tissue for medical purposes; and

Whereas, Many of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) documents and reports on life issues are now decades old, and the applicable science and technologies addressed therein have greatly, rapidly, and considerably changed, even as other new science and technologies have emerged in the same intervening time period, even in the last few years; and

Whereas, LCMS Life Ministry has recently hosted a series of meetings to discuss such issues among qualified theologians, ethicists, physicians, and lay persons; and

Whereas, Out of love for the neighbor, the church must ever look afresh at such critical issues and responsibly address them on the basis of God's Word; therefore be it

Resolved, That the President of the Synod appoint a task force within the Office of National Mission consisting of the Director of LCMS Life and Health Ministries; representatives from Lutherans For Life, the CTCR, and each of the Synod's seminaries; and rostered LCMS church workers or lay members of LCMS congregations who are respected for their expertise in the fields of medicine, procreative science, theology, ethics, and the like to study issues surrounding fertility and procreation; and be it further

Resolved, That this task force gather and arrange points for consideration, coordinate discussion, and identify actions leading to the production of appropriate LCMS responses to these issues (reports, study documents, essays, other media, and the like) with the CTCR and/or other appropriate LCMS entities; and be it finally

Resolved, That this task force continue this aforementioned work of leadership, facilitation, and coordination, and summarize its activities in a report to be completed by December 31, 2018, along with accompanying recommendations in the form of appropriate overtures to the Synod's 2019 national convention.

2019—To Give Guidance and Encourage Action on Beginning-of-Life Issues (Resolution 11-01A)

Whereas, Children are not something we choose for ourselves, but more correctly a heritage from the Lord,

which God freely gives and takes away in his own grace and wisdom (Psalm 127; Gen. 30:2; Job 1:21); and

Whereas, The Resolution 3-04 Task Force was formed with the mandate to study issues relating to procreation, fertility, and care for the unborn in order to identify actions leading to the production of appropriate LCMS responses to these issues, and to make recommendations in the form of appropriate overtures to the Synod's 2019 national convention; and

Whereas, The task force met on three occasions during the past triennium for careful deliberation and discussion of beginning-of-life issues; and

Whereas, The task force has identified certain proposed "actions" for the Synod to consider; therefore be it

Resolved, That the following specific recommendations of the task force be adopted and implemented:

- to commend the paper "The Child as a Gift of God" (Workbook, 326–29) to members of the Synod and Synod congregations for reflection, study and discussion, in particular, to study this concern: "whether our understanding of the meaning of the presence of children is being formed by the basic Christian belief that a child is God's gift to those who are married, or whether our attitudes and actions increasingly reflect a belief that what counts is satisfying the desire to have a child of one's own (and, perhaps even, a particular sort of child)";
- to urge filling as soon as fiscally possible the vacant position of LCMS Director of Life and Health Ministry since leadership in this office is crucial for moving forward on these critical and time-sensitive issues;
- to urge the CTCR, as it seeks to complete its assignment from the Synod to update its 1981 report on Human Sexuality (2016 Res. 14-03A, Proceedings, 242–3), to give new or renewed attention to the virtue of chastity in relation to specific issues such as 1) the vocation of singleness; 2) the nature and significance of Christian marriage; 3) a theology of procreation (including issues relating to contraception); 4) the reality and burden of infertility;
- to ask the CTCR to review and revisit its various documents on beginning of life issues (e.g., Abortion in Perspective [1984]; Christians and Procreative Choices: How Do God's Chosen Choose? [1996]; What Child is This? Marriage, Family, and Human Cloning, [2002]; Christian Faith and Human Beginnings: Christian Care and Pre-Implantation Human Life [2005]) to determine whether and/or where updates to these documents are needed, particularly regarding IVF, and recent developments in genetic testing, and how such

potential updates might best and most effectively be communicated to the Synod;

- to request LCMS Life and Health Ministries, in collaboration with supportive entities (e.g., LFL, the Concordia University Wisconsin Center for Bioethics), to continue to sponsor and coordinate conferences and other education on issues such as IVF, embryo adoption, methods of contraception, genomics and other new technologies, surrogacy, and medical consent, for the purpose of enhancing the church's understanding of and response to these issues;
- to encourage our seminaries and colleges to give increased attention and priority to beginning-of life issues through coursework, continuing education, and other means;
- to request the Office of National Mission (ONM) to prepare educational resources on beginning-of life issues for LCMS campus ministries and youth ministries;
- to encourage districts, circuits, congregations and schools to address these issues as they are able;
- to request the ONM to identify resources and individuals for consultation on beginning-of-life issues; and be it further

Resolved, That Synod post the paper "The Child as a Gift of God" to its website, perhaps on the CTCR pages, for ease of access and study.

Death/Euthanasia

1992—To Reaffirm Synod’s Position on Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide (Resolution 3-11A)

Whereas, The practice of euthanasia and of assisted suicide is becoming more common in our society; and

Whereas, It is critically necessary to counteract false understanding of compassion in our culture which claims that terminating the lives of those who are weak and help less is compassionate act; and

Whereas, The Synod’s Commission on Theology and Church Relations has provided most useful instrument in its *Report on Euthanasia with Guiding Principles* (1979); and

Whereas, This study is more than 12 years old, and in that time large number of developments in medical science and practice have occurred, with much additional thought and many different interpretations of this subject surfacing and being widely discussed; and

Whereas, There is growing need to provide spiritual care and support for those who struggle with the issues and burdens of caring for patients with chronically debilitating illnesses, including material support; and

Whereas, The CTCR is currently working on an update of its *Report on Euthanasia with Guiding Principles*; therefore be it

Resolved, That the CTCR be urged to complete and distribute its update as soon as possible; and be it further

Resolved, That The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in convention assembled commend to its members the following guiding principles found in the CTCR’s 1979 *Report on Euthanasia* for reference and guidance:

1. Euthanasia, in its proper sense, is synonym for mercy killing, which involves suicide and/or murder. It is, therefore, contrary to God’s Law.
2. As Creator, God alone knows with certainty whether disease or an injury is incurable.
3. When the God-given powers of the body to sustain its own life can no longer function and doctors in their professional judgment conclude that there is no real hope for recovery even with life-support instruments, Christian may in good conscience “let nature take its course.”

4. Administering pain-killing medications, even at the risk of shortening life, is permissible, since this does not entail the choice of death as either means or an end.
5. It is good ethical procedure for the doctor to request and receive statement signed by the patient, if competent to consent, or by the nearest of kin, agreeing to the uselessness of further “heroic efforts” and consenting to termination of treatments.
6. Each person, no matter how infirm and socially use less he or she may appear to be, deserves to be accepted as being created in the image of God.
7. While suffering is an intrusion into life, it provides the opportunity for Christian witness and service.
8. Often the time prior to death is so wrapped in mystery that no one ought forcibly to interrupt the movement of man’s spirit as it may be communicating through God the Spirit with his Creator and Redeemer by way of responding in trust and inner yearning.
9. Death is not merely, physical but crucial spiritual event for each person.
10. Any decisions made in this highly complex area, and any actions taken that may later appear to have been wrong, have been redeemed by that forgiveness which is available to all who put their trust in the work and merits of mankind’s Savior and Redeemer.
11. The spiritual and moral questions raised by the issue of euthanasia are of such nature that their evaluation is an enterprise touching on the very survival of the basic principles which undergird the integrity of our Christian faith and the survival of our cultural heritage. They constitute the primary spiritual and moral crucible of this age.
12. Christians are obligated to make their position known, by whatever means possible, as way of helping to shape public opinion on the question of euthanasia, and be it finally

Resolved, That we encourage the members of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to boldly address such ethical questions as the following to the society in which we live: “What kind of people are we becoming if we cannot care for the weak and helpless?” “What does it demonstrate about our character if we think we have the right to end life?”

1995—To Speak Out against Legalization of Assisted Suicide (Resolution 6-02)

Whereas, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod affirms the sanctity of human life and recognizes the reality of human suffering; and

Whereas, Any attempt to legalize assisted suicide is an affront to the Lord, who gives life, and opens the door for abuse and future legislation that would deny the freedom of many; and

Whereas, Suffering and depression are also opportunities for helping, healing, encouragement, and hope through the Gospel; and

Whereas, Physicians in particular have responsibility to sustain and promote life; and

Whereas, We respect the individual's right to refuse treatment or to forbid life-support systems by prior directive and to be allowed to die; therefore be it

Resolved, That The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in convention express its objection to medical personnel having any part in actively inducing death, even at the patient's request or at the request of the family; and be it further

Resolved, That the Gospel be applied to situations of suffering and depression as opportunities to help, heal, encourage, and provide hope; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod speak out against any attempt to legalize physician-assisted suicide and encourage its pastors and people to do the same.

2019—To Emphasize the Sanctity of Life and the Dangers of Physician-Assisted Suicide (Resolution 11-06A)

Whereas, Satan's original and continuing temptation invites us to worship at the altar of personal autonomy rather than acknowledge that we have been "bought with a price" (1 Cor. 6:19–20) and that "we are not our own"; and

Whereas, Current culture often portrays death as our friend and a means to escape from the sufferings of life, rather than recognizing that Scripture says death is our enemy (Rom. 6:23; 1 Cor. 15:26, 55–57); and

Whereas, God forbids murder (Ex. 20:13) and suicide (Ps. 31:14–15a) and "Euthanasia, in its proper sense, is a synonym for mercy killing, which involves suicide and/or murder. It is therefore, contrary to God's Law." (LCMS CTCR, Report on *Euthanasia with Guiding Principles* [1979] First Principle); and

Whereas, Advocates for physician-assisted suicide have exploited people's fear of suffering; and

Whereas, The underlying logic of physician-assisted suicide denies the inherent, God-given dignity of all human beings regardless of age, physical condition, mental capacity, or any other life circumstance; and

Whereas, Physician-assisted suicide is inherently abusive to elderly, disabled and otherwise dependent people, therefore no "safeguards" offer protection from this evil; and

Whereas, The "right to die" by means of physician-assisted suicide can be felt by the elderly and disabled as the duty to die; and

Whereas, The legalization of physician-assisted suicide may alter the trust relationship between doctors and their patients and families; and

Whereas, Physician-assisted suicide introduces financial incentives as insurance companies, financial heirs, government entities, and others may be tempted by financial self-interest to pressure patients into considering physician-assisted suicide; and

Whereas, The legalization of physician-assisted suicide may have the effect of normalizing suicide and thus increasing the rate of non-physician-assisted suicide in the community; and

Whereas, Cultural impulses are leading many to deny the Scriptural truth that God intends the body to be the temple of the Holy Spirit and he intends the body to be raised to everlasting life (John 11:25; 1 Cor. 6:19–20; 15:20–22); and

Whereas, Scripture reveals suffering to be a means by which God can bring blessing; therefore suffering is neither meaningless nor something to be avoided at all costs (Rom. 8:26–28; 2 Cor. 12:9; Heb. 12:5–10; James 1:2–4; 2 Cor. 1:3–4); and

Whereas, Scripture calls us to love our neighbors by protecting their physical well-being; and

Whereas, We are called that we "may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world," by "holding fast to the word of life" (Phil. 2:15–16); therefore be it

Resolved, That the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) in convention declare its opposition to physician-assisted suicide and legislative efforts on state and federal levels to legalize it; and be it further

Resolved, That the LCMS in convention encourage the congregations of the Synod to educate congregational members about the sanctity of life and the dangers of physician-assisted suicide; and be it further

Resolved, That the LCMS in convention encourage congregations and their members to be intentional in

reaching out in love to all people impacted by physician-assisted suicide; and be it further

Resolved, That the LCMS in convention encourage the Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty to address the issue of physician-assisted suicide in discussions about public policy; and be it finally

Resolved, That the LCMS in convention encourage congregations and their members to have a voice in the public square opposing physician-assisted suicide.

Disabilities

2007—To Include People with Disabilities in All Aspects of the Church's Life (Resolution 6-07)

Whereas, 2004 LCMS convention Res. 6-09 directed the LCMS Board for Human Care Ministries to address the following:

1. A mission statement for this ministry with and to people with disabilities;
2. A congregational self-assessment tool to assess the needs of people with disabilities;
3. Plans and guidelines to address physical and attitudinal barriers in churches;
4. Suggestions whereby people with disabilities can be involved in the life and ministry of a congregation; and
5. Congregational outreach to people with disabilities to achieve participation in the life and ministry of the congregation; and

Whereas, The Board for Human Care Ministries established the Disability Ministry Task Force, which began meeting in September 2005 under the mission statement: "To facilitate the full participation of people with disabilities in the life of Christ's Church"; and

Whereas, The Disability Ministry Task Force has identified the disabilities that fall under its oversight, namely:

1. Blindness
2. Deafness
3. Developmental disabilities
4. Learning disabilities
5. Mental illness
6. Physical disabilities; and

Whereas, People with disabilities and their families represent millions of people in the United States and around the world, 90 percent of whom do not attend church, many unaware of the Good News of Jesus Christ; and

Whereas, The Disability Ministry Task Force has developed a Web site, a disability awareness DVD, a Bible study, a congregational assessment tool, and other resources for use by national and district Synod and by local congregations; and

Whereas, The Disability Ministry Task Force has gathered resources from agencies and organizations supporting people with the disabilities under its oversight and has

placed those resources and Web sites on the Disability Ministry Web site; and

Whereas, The church is called to reach out to all people (Matt. 28:16–20) so that they may believe in Christ and have eternal life (John 3:16), and the outreach includes people with disabilities (Acts 10:34); therefore be it

Resolved, That The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, through its national and district offices and local congregations, utilize the resources at its disposal to educate congregations and to encourage and facilitate the full inclusion of people with disabilities and their families in the life of Christ's church, including service as church work professionals; and be it further

Resolved, That the seminaries and universities of Synod be commended and encouraged in their effort to educate church work students for ministry with people with disabilities, and that workers, schools, universities and congregations partner with agencies and organizations that support people with disabilities, such as Bethesda Lutheran Homes and the Board for Human Care Ministries; and be it finally

Resolved, That Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod entities and individual members advocate for people with disabilities within Synod and in the community-at-large, and support people with disabilities in advocating for themselves.

Gender Identity/Sexual Orientation

1973—To Declare Homophile Behavior Sinful (Resolution 2-04)

Whereas, God's Word clearly identifies homophile behavior as immoral, and condemns it (Lev. 18:22; 20: 13 and Rom. 1:24-27) and

Whereas, The Law and the Gospel of Jesus Christ are to be proclaimed and applied to all conditions of mankind; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod recognize homophile behavior as intrinsically sinful; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod urge that the Law and Gospel of the Scriptures be applied to homophiles as appropriate with view toward ministering the forgiveness of our Lord Jesus Christ to any and all sinners who are penitent; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod decline Overtures 2-106A and 2-106B.

2019—To Encourage Synod to Develop Resources to Aid Congregations and Schools regarding Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Issues (Resolution 11-03A)

Whereas, In the beginning God created man in his own image, "male and female, he created them" (Gen. 1:27); and

Whereas, As the Small Catechism (SC) teaches, "I believe that God has made me and all creatures. He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members ..." (SC II, First Article); and

Whereas, After humanity's fall into sin, Jesus again affirmed God's continuing work: that from the beginning he created them "male and female" (Matt. 19:4); and

Whereas, All sexual corruption and confusion result from humanity's fall into sin and often lead to rebellious and sinful acts against God's will (James 1:14–15); and

Whereas, All sexual acts outside of faithful, biblical marriage, which is between one man and one woman, are sinful and contrary to God's will (Rom. 13:13, 1 Cor. 6:9–11); and

Whereas, Gender is now considered by many in our culture as a social construct rather than a physical reality created by God; and

Whereas, The Supreme Court of the United States has ruled that marriages may be contracted between two persons of the same sex; and

Whereas, Our society includes persons who are uncertain whether they are "truly" male or female (this does not include intersex individuals, see excursus in Commission on Theology and Church Relations [CTCR], *Gender Identity Disorder or Gender Dysphoria in Christian Perspective*), others who present themselves as a member of the opposite sex in dress and physical appearance, and others who participate in hormonal and/or surgical procedures in an attempt to modify their anatomy from male to female or from female to male; and

Whereas, The Christian church is not without fault and has too often failed to minister compassionately to those who experience sexual orientation and gender identity issues, and has too often failed to address the sins of heterosexual members; and

Whereas, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom 8:1); and

Whereas, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) parochial schools, congregations, seminaries, the Concordia University System, and individuals in our Synod are experiencing mounting pressure as a result of cultural and legal changes; and

Whereas, LCMS church workers and laity have asked for guidance in pastoral care for individuals and families struggling with matters of same-sex attraction and gender identity issues; and

Whereas, Many faithful Christian individuals who experience sexual orientation or gender identity confusion have not accepted the common assumptions that same-sex acts and sex change therapies are moral, or even God pleasing; and

Whereas, The LCMS has produced resources such as the following CTCR reports: *Gender Identity Disorder or Gender Dysphoria in Christian Perspective* (Sept. 2014); *Human Sexuality: A Theological Perspective* (Sept. 1981); *Response to Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* (April 2012); and *The Creator's Tapestry: Scriptural Perspectives on Man-Woman Relationships in Marriage and the Church* (Dec. 2009); as well as the treatment of these matters in *Luther's Small Catechism*

with *Explanation* (Concordia Publishing House, 2017); therefore be it

Resolved, That the LCMS in convention affirm and faithfully confess the biblical truth that God created humanity as male and female; and be it further

Resolved, That we regard all those who experience sexual orientation and gender identity issues as our neighbors, beloved of God, and therefore condemn acts of abuse committed against them; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod in convention gives thanks for those individuals who, despite same-sex attraction or gender identity confusion, continue to live chaste and decent lives in repentant faith, and that LCMS congregations, districts, and Synod entities seek the counsel and leadership of such individuals in developing faithful approaches to minister to those who experience same-sex attraction and gender identity confusion; and be it further

Resolved, That pastors and congregations of the Synod be encouraged to minister compassionately to those who experience sexual orientation and gender identity issues through prayer, the proclamation of Law and Gospel, the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, corporate and individual confession and absolution, the proper administration of the Lord's Supper, the mutual conversation and consolation of the brothers and sisters, and pastoral care; and be it further

Resolved, That pastors and congregations of the Synod be encouraged to minister compassionately to the families, friends, and all others impacted by those who experience same-sex attraction, those who are involved in same-sex relationships, and those whose sexual self-understanding is shaped by a distressing conflict between their biological sex and their perceived gender identity through prayer, the proclamation of Law and Gospel, the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, corporate and individual confession and absolution, the proper administration of the Lord's Supper, the mutual conversation and consolation of the brothers and sisters, and pastoral care; and be it further

Resolved, That church workers and congregations in the Synod be encouraged to utilize the following CTCR reports: *Human Sexuality: A Theological Perspective*; *Response to Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust*; *The Creator's Tapestry: Scriptural Perspectives on Man-Woman Relationships in Marriage and the Church*; and *Gender Identity Disorder or Gender Dysphoria in Christian Perspective*; as well as the treatment of these matters in *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation* (Concordia Publishing House, 2017); and be it further

Resolved, That the CTCR be directed to prioritize the updating of the 1981 study, *Human Sexuality*; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod in convention direct the Office of National Mission, Concordia Publishing House, the seminaries, and the Concordia University System to continue to provide resources that enable the church to confess the truth boldly and minister compassionately both to those who experience sexual orientation and gender identity issues and those who care for them.

Mental Health

1975—To Emphasize Concern for Mental Health (Resolution 8-09)

Whereas, Emotional crises and stress are significant part of our present culture; and

Whereas, Approximately 45 percent of those who suffer from emotional disorders seek clergyman for initial counsel; and

Whereas, Mental health programs are now decentralizing from state mental hospitals to community mental health centers; and

Whereas, Mental health services have for the most part now become the responsibility of the community, which includes the congregation and its pastor(s); and

Whereas, Pastoral counseling centers are also being founded and their services expanding in the community; and

Whereas, The ministry of pastors and lay people would be strengthened by familiarization with community mental health programs and consultation from mental health professionals; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod encourage both pastors and lay members to serve as arms of the community mental health and pastoral counseling healing efforts and utilize and support the services available to them for referral, consultation, and education; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod encourage both pastors and lay members to work within their communities to support the efforts of the community mental health centers in educating their communities toward mental health understanding and services, in urging their communities to fund programs for cost sharing, and in supporting the efforts to have mental health programs and services within their neighborhoods.

1995—To Strengthen Synod's Ministry among Mentally Ill (Resolution 6-07A)

Whereas, Approximately 40 million adult Americans suffer from one or more mental disorders, and of these as many as 10 million are afflicted with chronic or prolonged mental illness; and

Whereas, As many as 12 million children suffer from some form of mental disorder, approximately million of whom have serious mental illness; and

Whereas, Persons with severe mental illness account for between 49 and 50 percent of the nation's homeless and occupy 25 percent of all the hospital beds in the country; and

Whereas, Because of ignorance, fear, and the perpetuation of myths, mentally ill persons are often stigmatized and discriminated against in housing, medical insurance, and employment opportunities and are denied adequately funded community treatment and support services; and

Whereas, The families of mentally ill persons are frequently burdened by these illnesses and often serve as the primary caretakers of their loved ones, needing the support and love of friends and church and yet often feeling abandoned and shunned; and

Whereas, The church is called to engage in Christ's ministry of healing and intercession for those who are ill in body, mind, and spirit and those who are discriminated against, lonely, unaccepted, and neglected; therefore be it

Resolved, That congregations and professional church workers recognize that serious mental illness exists within the family of faith; and be it further

Resolved, That the Districts of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod identify individuals and/or establish Task Force on Mental Illness within each District to address the concerns/needs of persons with serious mental illness and the concerns/needs of families; and be it further

Resolved, That individuals or task forces within each District be recognized as resources for training and equipping congregations and professional church workers to minister effectively to persons with mental illness and their families; and be it further

Resolved, That the individuals or task forces within each District be supported with prayers, publicity, and appropriate funding; and be it further

Resolved, That congregations and professional church workers encourage and enable persons with mental illness to participate fully in the life and the ministry of the congregation; and be it further

Resolved, That the Board for Human Care Ministries be encouraged to identify and/or develop resource materials which would be helpful in ministering to the mentally ill; and be it finally

Resolved, That congregations recognize and support Mental Illness Awareness Week (first week of October) by utilizing materials approved by the Districts/Synod and publicly praying for persons with serious mental illness.

2019—To Encourage Training of Our Pastors, Church Workers and Congregations to Recognize and Provide Pastoral Care for Those Suffering from Clinical Depression, Mental Illnesses, and Other Mental Disorders (Resolution 3-04A)

Whereas, Our Lord commands us to love our neighbor as ourselves (Mark 12:31); and

Whereas, Our Lord also calls us to “bear one another’s burdens” (Gal. 6:2) and clinical depression, mental illness, and other mental disorders are a great burden for those who suffer from them; and

Whereas, Paul, the apostle, reminds us, “If one part [of the Body of Christ] suffers, every part with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it” (1 Cor. 12:26); and

Whereas, Jesus, in fulfilling the Scripture, quoted Isaiah, saying, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (Luke 4:18–19); and

Whereas, The Psalmist declared, “Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him! For those who fear Him have no lack!” (Ps. 34:8, 9b); and

Whereas, According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), an estimated 22.1 percent of Americans ages 18 and older, about one out of five adults, suffer from an array of diagnosable mental disorders in a given year (one of our churches with a membership of 100 has an estimated 20 persons with a mental illness); 10 percent of children aged 5–16 have a clinically diagnosable mental health problem and 70 percent have not had appropriate interventions to treat them (National Mental Health Foundation)—such diagnosable mental disorders ranging from traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress, bipolar disorder, depression, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and schizophrenia and including addictions and eating disorders like bulimia and anorexia, with other disorders on the increase that include autism and Alzheimer’s Disease; and

Whereas, Mental illness or a mental disorder has a downward spiral effect in families and among people that may include behavioral malfunctions, addictions, marital problems leading to divorce, loss of job, incarceration,

and suicide, and it is estimated that 90 percent of people committing suicide suffer from a diagnosable mental illness (American Foundation for Suicide Prevention); and

Whereas:

- There is a stigma among the mentally ill to understand their illness and a fear of being identified with a mental illness/disorder;
- Because mental illness carries with it an undesirable regard, there is indecision among the mentally ill to get help;
- Mental illness is different from a physical illness in the way it is treated and understood;
- Due to reasons like stigma and lack of access to the mental health system, the average delay between experiencing symptoms and seeking help is 10 years (the executive director of NAMI, Mary Giliberti); and
- Mental illnesses and mental disorders present both challenges and problems for pastors and congregations because of the stigma connected with the illness and/or disorder from the one suffering from it to the ones ministering to them, attempting to provide care and compassion to their members; and

Whereas, Our pastors, church workers, and congregations may be ill-equipped to provide ministry and compassionate care to those suffering from a mental illness/disorder—to more fully understand the plight of human need regarding those suffering mental illness and to draw from Scripture that which is needed to provide them with compassionate, caring, knowledgeable, effective ministry; therefore be it

Resolved, That our seminaries, universities, and recognized service organizations be encouraged to continue to strive for improved training in mental illness, health, and wellness for those studying to be pastors and church workers; and be it further

Resolved, That we encourage the seminaries and universities to include continuing education opportunities and resources regarding the topic of mental illness; and be it further

Resolved, That The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod districts work to provide additional training to all workers through partnerships with our seminaries, our Concordias, and other trusted experts in the field; and be it finally

Resolved, That we encourage our pastors, church workers, and congregations to actively advocate for mental health and wellness in their congregations, among their people, and provide Christ-centered compassion and ministerial supportive care to those in need through prayer, private confession and absolution, and the means of grace.

Domestic Violence and Abuse

1989—To Encourage Synodical and Congregational Support for Prevention of Child Abuse (Resolution 7-15A)

Whereas, Jesus showed special concern for children, admonishing His disciples, “Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 19:14 RSV); and

Whereas, Child abuse and neglect are major problems in our country and definite hindrance to child’s faith; and

Whereas, Child abuse is cyclic, often perpetuating god less life-styles in victims, including abuse of their own children, crime, drug and alcohol abuse, and the inability to form relationships; therefore be

Resolved, That the congregations of the LCMS be encouraged to recognize April or some other month as Child Abuse Prevention month with sermons, prayers, and education of members in prevention strategies and methods of reaching out into the community; and be it further

Resolved, That schools of the LCMS be encouraged to develop prevention education curriculums to use with their students; and be it further

Resolved, That the Board for Social Ministry Services provide congregations with appropriate materials to carry out this ministry; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Board for Parish Services be encouraged to develop and assess already existing prevention education curriculums for Lutheran schools to use with their students, working jointly with the Board for Social Ministry Services in this effort.

1989—To Address Problem of Domestic Abuse (Resolution 7-16)

Whereas, Domestic abuse is an escalating problem; and

Whereas, Domestic abuse degrades the family, increases human suffering, prevents healthy growth and development, and perpetuates unchristian life-styles; and

Whereas, Ministry to those affected by domestic abuse follows from our strong commitment to pro-life and family concerns; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Board for Social Ministry Services through its Standing Committee on Human Care

1. sensitize congregations to the problem of domestic abuse;
2. provide resources and recommend models for ministry to assist families in dealing with domestic abuse;
3. encourage the Board for Higher Education Services to develop programs in synodical institutions that train professional workers to provide Christ-focused care to needy and damaged individuals and families.

1995—To Care for Victims of Domestic Violence and Abuse (Resolution 6-14)

Whereas, Domestic violence and abuse is an escalating problem in our society; and

Whereas, Domestic violence and abuse degrades the family, increases human suffering, prevents healthy growth and development, and perpetuates unchristian lifestyles; and

Whereas, Ministry to those affected by domestic violence and abuse follows from the strong commitment of the Synod to the sanctity of life and the Christian family; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Board for Human Care Ministries continue to

1. sensitize congregations to the problem of domestic abuses so that they might more easily recognize and acknowledge signs of domestic violence and abuse in their midst;
2. provide resources and recommend models for ministry to assist families in dealing with domestic abuse, including material concerning appropriate ways to provide physical safety to those caught in violent and abusive relationships;
3. encourage the Board for Higher Education Services to develop programs in synodical institutions that train professional workers to provide appropriate Christ-focused care to individuals and families caught in violent and abusive relationships including appropriate ways to encourage both the victims of violence and abuse and those inflicting it to seek competent Christian counseling.

2007—To Develop Domestic and Child Abuse Education Materials and Programs (Resolution 6-06)

Whereas, Domestic violence in this country has reached epidemic proportions, with 31 percent of women experiencing physical assault from a partner and 40 percent of teenage girls age 14–17 report knowing someone their age who has been hit or beaten by a boyfriend; and

Whereas, In 1992, Synod President Dr. Alvin Barry recognized the gravity of this issue and convened the President's Commission on Women to look into the problem of domestic violence in the church; and

Whereas, Although in 2001 this commission produced and distributed to pastors two booklets entitled, *Never Will I Leave You: A Pastor's Handbook on Domestic Violence* and *Has God Abandoned Me?: A Christian Woman's Guide to Domestic Violence*, these booklets are no longer in print; and

Whereas, Child abuse in this country has also reached epidemic proportions, with 2.5 million cases of child abuse reported each year and the actual incidence estimated at three times that amount, with one in three girls and one in seven boys sexually abused prior to the age of 18; and

Whereas, Due to advances in technology via the Internet, pornography is more readily available than ever before and pedophilia attempts are escalating at an alarming rate; and

Whereas, Clergy sexual misconduct constitutes a portion of the abuse problem and each congregation has a responsibility to monitor these situations and to protect parishioners from this type of misconduct; and

Whereas, Domestic violence is primarily perpetrated against females, child abuse affects both males and females equally, so that in all cases, churches need to equip themselves to deal with both female and male victims and perpetrators; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod direct the Board for Human Care Ministries to appoint a committee to examine these issues and provide materials and trained individuals to assist districts, congregations, and schools in addressing abuse and ministering to the spiritual needs of those struggling with the effects of abuse; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod make these same materials and training available to seminary and professional church worker students; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Board for Human Care Ministries, in consultation with the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR), examine these issues and comment specifically on the topics of forgiveness, repentance, and reconciliation in the context of abuse situations.

2019—To Promote Adoption of Policies that Continue Vigilance in Child Protection (Resolution 1-07A)

Whereas, Many congregations and recognized service organizations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) have significant ministries in schools and early childhood learning centers; and

Whereas, The devil prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour, and Christians are called to resist him, standing firm in the faith (1 Peter 5:8); and

Whereas, The LCMS Council of Presidents has adopted a zero-tolerance policy with respect to sexual abuse; and

Whereas, Synod has provided resources to districts, congregations, schools and others within the Synod for the prevention of child abuse, e.g., www.lcms.org/social-issues/child-abuse; and

Whereas, The President of the Synod and the Council of Presidents (COP) in April 2019 resolved unanimously to assert and re-affirm the COP's long-standing zero-tolerance policy with respect to child sexual abuse; therefore be it

Resolved, That Synod in convention encourage congregations, schools, and early childhood centers to adopt policies and actions to protect children in their churches and schools; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod commend the COP for their zero-tolerance policy with respect to child sexual abuse; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod encourage church and school leaders to be aware of the mandatory reporting laws of their states and/or local jurisdictions as they develop and adopt child protection policies; and be it further

Resolved, That all congregations and schools of the Synod be vigilant in protecting children from abuse; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Office of National Mission provide recommended policies and strategies toward the same through the Making Disciples For Life initiative.

Human Trafficking

2010—To Support Efforts to End Human Trafficking/Slavery (Resolution 6-07A)

Whereas, The United Nations reports that human trafficking is a thriving business today with a total annual market value of 32 billion dollars; and

Whereas, The United Nations reports that at any given time 2.5–2.7 million people throughout the world are “recruited, entrapped, transported, and exploited” in a “process called human trafficking”; and

Whereas, The United Nations reports that persons from 127 countries become exploited in 137 nations; and

Whereas, Trading in “bodies and souls of human beings” is specifically condemned by the Bible (Rev. 18:13); and

Whereas, Saint Paul lists slave traders in 1 Timothy 1:10 (“enslavers” in the ESV) in his list of heinous sinners who oppose God’s Law and act contrary to the sound doctrine of the Gospel (1 Tim. 1:8–11); and

Whereas, Saint Paul in his letter to Philemon urged Philemon to free the slave Onesimus, not under compulsion but as a free act of Christian charity (Philemon 12–16, 21); and

Whereas, Saint Paul urges us, as we have opportunity, to “do good to all” (Gal. 6:10), the freeing of fellow human beings from bondage certainly to be considered “doing good”; and

Whereas, As Christians living in the United States we have a history that enables us to understand the horrors and degradation involved in human trafficking/slavery; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention direct the President of the Synod to write a letter to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime expressing the Synod’s prayerful support of that office’s efforts to end the ongoing practice of human trafficking/slave trade; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod in convention direct the Board for Human Care Ministries in conjunction with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS) to provide the Synod’s pastors and congregations with information about this practice and to assist in efforts to end the ongoing practice of human trafficking/slave trade; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod encourage its pastors and lay people to become educated regarding this issue and to be

proactive in their response, including but not limited to sending letters to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime expressing their prayerful support of that office’s efforts to end human trafficking/slavery.

Bioethics

1981—To Encourage Donation of Kidneys and Other Organs (Resolution 8-05)

Whereas, We accept and believe that our Lord Jesus came to give life and to give it abundantly (John 10:10); and

Whereas, Through advances in medical science we are aware that at the time of death some of our organs can be transplanted to alleviate pain and suffering of afflicted human beings (see Gal. 6:10); and

Whereas, Our heavenly Father has created us so that we can adequately and safely live with one kidney and can express our love and relieve the unnecessary prolonged suffering of our relative; and

Whereas, We have an opportunity to help others out of love for Christ, through the donation of organs; therefore be it

Resolved, That our pastors, teachers, and DCE's be encouraged to inform the members of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod of the opportunity to sign Universal Donor Card (which is to authorize the use of our needed organs at the time of death in order to relieve the suffering of individuals requiring organ transplants); and be it further

Resolved, That we encourage family members to become living kidney donors; and be it further

Resolved, That the program committees of pastors and teachers conferences be encouraged to include "organ and tissue transplants" as topic on their agendas; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Board of Social Ministry and World Relief seek ways to implement this program so that the entire Synod may join in this opportunity to express Christian concern.

2007—To State LCMS Position on Stem Cell Research (Resolution 6-02)

Whereas, Medical research continues to generate new advances that create ethical questions which prior generations did not have to face; and

Whereas, Stem cell research, in particular, offers the promise of delivering cures to debilitating diseases; and

Whereas, The LCMS is not opposed to all stem cell research as a means of seeking alleviation for disease; and

Whereas, The pro-life position supports adult stem cell research, which does not involve the destruction of human life and has been utilized in treatment of maladies such as multiple sclerosis, Crohn's disease, rheumatoid arthritis, sickle cell anemia, stroke, limb gangrene, corneal regeneration, heart damage, Parkinson's disease, and spinal cord injury; and

Whereas, The pro-life position opposes embryonic stem cell research (ESCR), which destroys human life in order to obtain embryonic stem cells for research and has so far shown no success for treatment in humans even though touted in the media as the source of great cures in the future; and

Whereas, There are calls across the nation by many for state and federal funding of ESCR; and

Whereas, Voters in the state of Missouri faced such a campaign in the November 2006 election, which passed by a narrow margin in support of ESCR, now allowing this type of research in that state; and

Whereas, The Scriptures are replete with references showing that God cares for and defends the weak and the fatherless (Deut. 10:18; Ps. 68:5; Ps. 10:14) and, furthermore, that we are to "speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves" (Prov. 31:8–9 NIV); and

Whereas, Christians are to let their light shine in this dark world regarding this type of ethical dilemma, and since the LCMS takes a strong and clear pro-life position; therefore be it

Resolved, That in our preaching and teaching we emphasize that it is God alone who gives life and who is to take human life; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod urge its members to give public witness against the destruction of human life in embryonic stem cell research; and be it finally

Resolved, That the 2007 LCMS convention make known its support of adult stem cell research and its opposition to ESCR, which involves the taking of a human life.