To Encourage Responsible Citizenship and Compassion Toward Neighbors Who Are Immigrants Among Us

RESOLUTION 11-05A

Reports R1.2, R9, R12, R59.5 (*CW*, 16–71, 92–94, 95–104, 245–47)

WHEREAS, God's Word lifts up the stranger and sojourner: "When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God" (Lev. 19:33–34), "And the word of the LORD came to Zechariah, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another, do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner, or the poor, and let none of you devise evil against another in your heart'" (Zech. 7:8–10); and

WHEREAS, Jesus taught us that the neighbor we are called to serve is the person in need: "Jesus asked, 'Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?' He said, 'The one who showed him mercy.' And Jesus said to him, 'You go, and do likewise'" (Luke 10:36–37); and

WHEREAS, Scripture instructs us: "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment" (Rom. 13:1–2) even as the Fourth Commandment indicates; and

WHEREAS, Scripture enfolds our submission to the governing authorities within the mandate of Christ: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these'" (Mark 12:30–31; cf. Rom. 13:8–10); and

WHEREAS, In Christ Jesus all the baptized are children of God, through faith. "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26–28); and

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) began as an immigrant church reaching immigrants with the Gospel, and continues to confess that we are sojourners here on earth: "Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul" (1 Peter 2:11); therefore be it

Resolved, That the LCMS in convention commend for study and discussion the Commission on Theology and Church Relations report, *Immigrants Among Us: A Lutheran Framework for Addressing Immigration Issues* (2012) together with the Bible study based on the report; and be it further

Resolved, That the members of the congregations of the Synod, as part of the body of Christ, be encouraged to recognize their calling to see the immigrant and the stranger as their neighbor, to share the Gospel and make disciples of all people, and to live as responsible citizens; and be it further

Resolved, That the members of Synod give bold witness in keeping with the Scriptures and Confessions against inhumane treatment and attitudes toward immigrants, war refugees, and minorities; and be it finally

Resolved, That the members of the Synod be encouraged not to allow political divisions to become church divisions and to heed Paul's words from Ephesians chapter four: "Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you" (Eph. 4:29–32).