

1 **Care for Black, Indigenous, Persons of Color Leaders (BIPOC) and**
2 **Congregations During Times of Alleged Misconduct and Discipline**

3 **WHEREAS**, the teaching of the Church instructs us in mutual accountability reflected in 1
4 Corinthians 5 under the guidance of Saint Paul; and

5 **WHEREAS**, for the good order, transparency, and faithfulness of the Gospel a consistent
6 discipline is needed in all levels of the Church; and

7 **WHEREAS**, the Ethnic Specific and Multicultural Ministries, its leadership, and their
8 communities feel vulnerable and discriminated against in situations of allegation because of a
9 lack of dialog and accountability of those in positions of power and decision making; and

10 **WHEREAS**, at this time in our society many people are experiencing deep harm from
11 institutional racism; and

12 **WHEREAS**, it is incumbent upon the Metropolitan Chicago Synod (MCS) to recognize the
13 racism present within ourselves and our institutions, and to make strides towards healing
14 actions; and

15 **WHEREAS**, The MCS has spent significant time studying the ELCA document *How Strategic*
16 *and Authentic is Our Diversity; A Call for Confession, Reflection and Healing Action (2019)*¹ and
17 confessing the synod's complicity in acts of harm and racism; and

18 **WHEREAS**, the MCS wishes to live into our mission—to proclaim the Gospel, make disciples,
19 and do justice, in Jesus' name—by working toward healing actions; and

20 **WHEREAS**, under the laws enforced by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission², racial
21 discrimination in hiring practices has long been illegal in the United States of America, and

22 **WHEREAS**, even with these laws and past good intentions of our synod and individual
23 congregations, underrepresentation of Black, Indigenous, Latine, and others who identify as
24 People of Color (BIPOC) leadership continues in the synod; and

25 **WHEREAS**, the BIPOC leaders serving our synod are very much in the minority and many
26 times the only person of color in the room; and

27 **WHEREAS**, in this church, severance packages are misused to keep rostered ministers silent
28 and disproportionately affects BIPOC and other marginalized rostered ministers—a practice
29 which we believe goes against our call as Christians to love our neighbors as well as our
30 synodical values; and

31 **WHEREAS** the current policies and public actions of other synods and the churchwide
32 expression have brought to light both real and potentially harmful synodical processes regarding

¹ https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Strategy_Toward_Authentic_Diversity.pdf

² <https://www.eeoc.gov/statutes/title-vii-civil-rights-act-1964>

33 the call process, discipline, and misconduct can be for BIPOC leaders and multicultural
34 congregations; and

35 **WHEREAS**, the way that we, as the MCS, handle misconduct cases is part of our public
36 witness; therefore be it

37 **RESOLVED** that in the event of a misconduct claim, the MCS Office of the Bishop and the
38 Synod Council will review and continue to follow the outlined protocols in the synod and ELCA
39 constitution³; and be it further

40 **RESOLVED** that the MCS will seek to honor and respect our multicultural congregations by
41 paying particular attention to ethnically and culturally specific holidays, special occasions, or
42 culturally-significant leaders, leadership roles, events and traditions for that community before
43 removing a rostered minister; and be it further

44 **RESOLVED** that, in the event that the Office of the Bishop of the MCS needs to remove a
45 rostered minister in leadership in an ethnic-specific or a multicultural congregation, a synod staff
46 member who has spent significant time in that community should accompany the bishop and
47 our synod staff person for DIBs (Diversity Inclusion and Belonging) to share that news and, if
48 necessary, an interpreter be present so that everyone in the congregation can understand what
49 is being shared; and be it further

50 **RESOLVED** that when a BIPOC rostered minister meets with the Office of the Bishop, the MCS
51 Consultation or Discipline Committee, that rostered minister may choose to have a
52 representative from the BIPOC community present with them to hear what is discussed; and be
53 it further

54 **RESOLVED** that if the rostered minister in question serves a Synodically Authorized Worship
55 Community (SAWC) for which the synod council holds both the employment status and roster
56 status, a member of the ELCA Ethnic Specific Desk in association with this SAWC be consulted
57 as part of the investigation phase ensuring that the method is culturally appropriate; and be it
58 further

59 **RESOLVED** that neither the MCS Council nor the Office of the Bishop would ask a rostered
60 minister in need of pastoral care, counseling, coaching, or other professional services, to waive
61 HIPAA rights which would violate the trust that undergirds these avenues of healing, even
62 though a counselor may from time to time provide evaluations to the synod as to their opinion
63 about the person's readiness for a return to pastoral ministry; and be it further

64 **RESOLVED** that the severance package and the transition in ministry agreement be negotiated
65 separately; and be it further

³ MCS Constitution S13.31; ELCA Constitution Chapter 20

66 **RESOLVED** that in such case, the synod and affected rostered minister will work to provide a
67 statement to established communities and associations that would be affected by the decision;
68 and be it further

69 **RESOLVED** that in such case, pastoral care would be provided to not only the immediate
70 community affected but offered to all BIPOC rostered ministers and BIPOC lay leaders around
71 the synod; and be it further

72 **RESOLVED** that the MCS will continue to listen to the voices of BIPOC rostered ministers and
73 multicultural congregations and continue to adapt our policies and procedures to value these
74 leaders and communities as we seek to heal the racism and brokenness that exists in this
75 church, and be it further

76 **RESOLVED** that the MCS affirms the ELCA Church Council action from their meeting in April
77 2022 which “Authorized the creation of a task force to review the current process for discipline
78 and its impact on people of color and other historically marginalized groups.”⁴

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⁴ <https://elca.org/News-and-Events/8136>