

MEMORIAL ON GUN VIOLENCE, GUN POLICY

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WHEREAS, since its first Churchwide Assembly in 1989 the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has spoken numerous times on gun violence and public policy on guns: in social policy resolutions (e.g., “Ban of Military-Style Semi-Automatic Weapons” (1989), “Community Violence—Gun Control” (1993), and “Gun Violence Prevention” (2016); in the social message on “Community Violence” (1994); in the social statement “Our Calling in Education” (2007)); and through pastoral statements by the Conference of Bishops and by the Presiding Bishop; and

WHEREAS, the social message on “Community Violence,” despite mentioning gun violence and public policy on guns, is a broad statement about violence in community and, therefore, does not take into consideration the causes of, impacts of, and solutions to gun violence, nor does it provide members of this church with sufficient moral guidance to act as Christian citizens on the issues of gun violence and public policy; and

WHEREAS, since the adoption of the social message on “Community Violence” in 1994, important developments have occurred in the areas of gun violence and public policy on guns (e.g., an increase in mass shootings and suicides using guns, changes to open and concealed weapon carry laws, the proliferation of gun sales not subject to background checks, the expiration in 2004 of the Assault Weapons Ban, court decisions concerning the Second Amendment, and data on mental health as a factor in gun violence) that have rendered previous actions of the ELCA in addressing gun violence and public policy on guns inadequate; and

WHEREAS, recent mass shootings, especially in schools, have created an urgent need for a reevaluation of the issues of gun violence and the development of a more comprehensive and cohesive statement concerning gun violence and public policy on guns; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to develop study materials about gun violence and public policy on guns; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Chicago Synod memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to encourage synods and member congregations to dedicate a time of study and exhortation to action on the issue of gun violence and public policy on guns; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Chicago Synod memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to develop a social message on gun violence and public policy on guns that “point[s] to human suffering, grave injustice, pending danger, (and) social perplexity” that are part of this social issue.

49 Submitted by:

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