

1    **RESOLUTION ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE**  
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3    WHEREAS, Illinois prisons operate at 172.6% of design capacity, and are second only  
4           to Alabama in terms of being overcrowded;

5    WHEREAS, Cook County Jail serves as the largest mental health care provider in the  
6           United States;

7    WHEREAS, almost 70% of all Illinois inmates are in prison for non-violent crime;

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9    WHEREAS, budget cuts have eliminated services and educational programs that  
10           would prepare inmates for their reentry to society;

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12   WHEREAS, offenders face great obstacles when they return to society which make it  
13           difficult to secure housing and employment resulting in a recidivism rate  
14           higher than the U.S. average: in 2011, 51.7% of released prisoners  
15           returned to prison within three years versus the national average of  
16           43.3%;

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18   WHEREAS, both the General Assembly and the Governor recognize the need for  
19           comprehensive reform: the Joint Criminal Justice Reform Committee was  
20           created in the last session and was reconstituted in this session; and  
21           Governor Rauner has appointed a 28-member Criminal Justice Reform  
22           Commission;

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24   WHEREAS, Lutheran Advocacy connects faith with public life, endeavors to further  
25           God's work in our world by advancing the common good, and represents a  
26           valuable tool to members of the ELCA as we do advocacy;

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28   WHEREAS, the social statement, "**The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the**  
29           **Cries**" was adopted in 2013 at the 13<sup>th</sup> biennial Churchwide Assembly  
30           and gives direction for action; therefore be it

31   RESOLVED, that congregations be encouraged to read and study the social statement,  
32           "**The Church and Criminal Justice**"; and be it further

33   RESOLVED, that congregations and members discuss how they might serve those  
34           involved in the Criminal Justice System, whether offenders, victims, or  
35           those who work in the system; and be it further

36   RESOLVED, that congregations become acquainted with the criminal justice ministries  
37           provided within the Metro Chicago area; and be it further

38   RESOLVED, that members of congregations be encouraged to join Lutheran Advocacy-  
39           Illinois at [Lutheranadvocacy.org](http://Lutheranadvocacy.org) in order to engage in this ministry more  
40           effectively; and be it further

41 RESOLVED, that members of congregations encourage their lawmakers to support  
42 criminal justice legislation that focuses on the restoration of offenders to  
43 society and to oppose punitive measures that make it difficult for offenders  
44 to make successful return to society.

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46 Submitted by:

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48 All voting members of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Chicago, Ill.

49  
50 The Rev. Benjamin Adams, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Chicago, Ill.

51 The Rev. Craig Mueller, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Chicago, Ill.

52 The Rev. Michelle Sevig, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Chicago, Ill.

53 Ms. Dinah Wayne, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Chicago, Ill.

54 Ms. Marji Shannon, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Chicago, Ill.