

RESOLUTION ON GUN VIOLENCE, GUN POLICY

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

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

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19 WHEREAS, since the adoption of the social message on “Community Violence” in
20 1994, important developments have occurred in the areas of gun violence
21 and public policy on guns (e.g., an increase in mass shootings and
22 suicides using guns, changes to open and concealed weapon carry laws,
23 the proliferation of gun sales not subject to background checks, the
24 expiration in 2004 of the Assault Weapons Ban, court decisions
25 concerning the Second Amendment, and data on mental health as a factor
26 in gun violence) that have rendered previous actions of the ELCA in
27 addressing gun violence and public policy on guns inadequate; and

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29 WHEREAS, the Renewal of the Covenant between the ELCA’s Metropolitan Chicago
30 Synod and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago on October 31,
31 2017, states, “Salient among our new challenges is the violence in the
32 Chicagoland area that extinguishes the lives of so many of our young
33 people and leaves families and communities devastated by grief and
34 despair. We recognize that for us this violence is the ‘sign of the times’ to
35 which we must respond as followers of the Lord Jesus”; and,

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

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42 WHEREAS, the “Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in
43 America for Addressing Social Concerns” state that “Under extraordinary
44 circumstances, the Church Council, after consultation with the Office of
45 the Presiding Bishop, may suspend these procedures... [for the
46 development of messages on social issues] to respond to an especially
47 urgent situation”; therefore, be it

49 RESOLVED, that the congregations of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod be encouraged
50 to study the ELCA's current policies, messages and statements on gun
51 violence; and be it further

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53 RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Chicago Synod engage with the Roman Catholic
54 Archdiocese of Chicago, and other ecumenical and interfaith partners, to
55 develop a constructive and practical plan of action to address the issues of
56 gun violence; and be it further

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58 RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Assembly direct the Synod Bishop
59 and Synod Council to ask the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in
60 consultation with the Church Council, to develop a social message on gun
61 violence and public policy on guns, and in view of the urgency of the
62 situation, to suspend the usual procedures as allowed in the "Policies and
63 Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing
64 Social Concerns."

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