

RESOLUTION #4

Submitted by: Northwestern Minnesota Synod, Moorhead Conference 6

A Resolution for Congregational Tithing for Mission Support

1 **WHEREAS,** through our baptism, all Christians are called to be good stewards, that is, people “who
2 manage the resources God has given, in the world and in the church,” (Donald M. McKim,
3 *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*, Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press,
4 1996, 270); and
5 **WHEREAS,** Jesus Christ, himself, the preeminent steward, instructed his disciples of every time and place
6 that, “From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one
7 to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded,” (Luke 12:48b, NRSV); and
8 **WHEREAS,** the Constitution of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod (S6.03.e.5) and the model
9 Constitution for congregations in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (C4.03.9) both
10 include in their Statements of Purpose that they shall encourage financial support for the
11 work of our church by individuals and congregations; and
12 **WHEREAS,** when it comes to good financial stewardship, we often seek to educate and encourage all the
13 baptized to work towards giving 10% of their income to their congregation (using the biblical
14 model of the tithe as the goal for our giving in response to all that God has given us); and
15 **WHEREAS,** we teach that we offer our gifts to God, because all that we have, ourselves, our time and our
16 possessions were first God’s gifts to us; and
17 **WHEREAS,** God’s call to faithful giving, (“*tithing*”), is not a call to burden or despair but is God’s call to
18 spiritual discipline in regards to material possessions. Luther described the state of sinners,
19 (that is *all* of us), as *incurvatus in se*, “curved-in-on-self.” This sinful focus on self fuels our
20 sins of greed, idolatry, and consumeristic materialism. Furthermore, just as this sinful
21 condition affects the individual, it also affects us corporately as a “turned-in-on-self”
22 congregation. God’s call to the spiritual discipline of tithing is designed not only to help the
23 end recipient of our gift but as a “lifting up” of our focus away from *ourselves* both as
24 individuals and congregations to the world around us; and
25 **WHEREAS,** the ministries undertaken by the Synod on behalf of our many congregations and members
26 further the mission of the Gospel, while often requiring funding; and
27 **WHEREAS,** as the body of Christ we’ve had ample opportunity to be distracted by current economic
28 realities as well as social issues on which we struggle to find common ground; therefore be it
29 **RESOLVED,** that this Synod thank God for those congregations whose synodical benevolence is currently
30 greater than 10% of their income and encourage these congregations to model generous

31 stewardship of their financial resources, while at the same time striving to continue growing
32 in their giving as they are able; and be it further
33 **RESOLVED,** that this Synod in Assembly invite the congregations of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod
34 to consider establishing as a goal the support of programs and ministries of the Northwestern
35 Minnesota Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by giving at least 10% of
36 congregational income to the synod by means of the synodical benevolence (“mission
37 support”), characterized by congregational Statements of Intent (SOI); and be it further
38 **RESOLVED,** that this Synod in Assembly encourage those congregations whose synodical benevolence is
39 currently below that 10% goal to endeavor to increase their efforts within their congregation
40 to educate and encourage a generous growth in their giving in order to achieve and exceed
41 this 10% goal.