

Resolution #5

Submitted by the Northwestern Minnesota Synod Council at their 2/11/17 meeting

Regarding Synodically Authorized Ministry

1 **WHEREAS**, the *Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran*
2 *Church in America* has included, since 1993, bylaw 7.31.09; and

3 **WHEREAS**, this church is experiencing a dramatic decline in the number of ministers of Word
4 and Sacrament available to serve in its congregations and ministries; and

5 **WHEREAS**, this decline in ministers of Word and Sacrament is experienced most keenly in
6 parts of this church that are rural, geographically remote or located at a distance from
7 congregations or ministries of the ELCA and its full communion partner church bodies; and

8 **WHEREAS**, 7.31.09 has offered a helpful and responsible protocol for identifying, preparing
9 and authorizing members of congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church to be authorized
10 by synod bishops to serve the ministry of Word and Sacrament in such situations; and

11 **WHEREAS**, such synodically authorized ministries could be offered in congregations and
12 ministries that lack a minister of Word and Sacrament as well as congregations and ministries
13 that are under-served by an individual minister of Word and Sacrament; and

14 **WHEREAS**, in such situations a synodically authorized minister could extend and enhance the
15 ministry of Word and Sacrament; therefore be it

16 **RESOLVED**, that the Northwestern Minnesota Synod, in assembly, memorialize the
17 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to amend 7.31.09 as
18 follows:

19 **7.31.09. Licensure and Synodically Authorized Ministry.** ~~When need exists to render~~ There
20 are in this church situations in which, in the judgment of the synod bishop Word and Sacrament
21 ministry for a congregation or ministry of this church where it is not possible to provide
22 appropriate pastoral leadership, will be best served, in the absence of a minister of Word and
23 Sacrament, or significantly enhanced, where at least one minister of Word and Sacrament is
24 present, by authorizing a member of a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in
25 America to offer this ministry. In such situations the synod bishop—acting with the consent of
26 the congregation or ministry, in consultation with the Synod Council, and in accord with
27 standards and qualifications developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the
28 Conference of Bishops, and approved by the Church Council—may authorize a person who is a
29 member of a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to offer this ministry.
30 Such an individual shall be supervised by a minister of Word and Sacrament appointed by the
31 synod bishop; such service shall be rendered during its duration under the sacramental authority
32 of the bishop as the synod's pastor. Such an individual will be trained and licensed to fulfill this
33 ministry for a specified period of time and in a given location only. Authorization, remuneration,
34 direct supervision, and accountability are to be determined by the appropriate synodical

35 leadership according to churchwide standards and qualifications for this type of ministry.
36 Authorization for such service shall be reviewed annually and renewed only when a
37 demonstrated need remains for its continuation