Report of the Reference and Counsel Committee

The function of the Reference and Counsel Committee (RC Committee) is to review and report all original main motions of resolutions together with any recommendations and to prepare and present general resolutions of courtesy and acknowledgment. The authority and operating guidance for the RC Committee are located at S7.51.04 in the bylaws of the Southeastern Iowa Synod.

Pursuant to S7.51.04, resolutions may be submitted forty-five days prior to the Synod Assembly. This year there were four resolutions submitted by the April 16, 2013 deadline. The RC Committee reviewed these resolutions, consulted with the authors in some instances to clarify content, revised with consent and then took the following actions:

- Resolution #1 – Referred to the Assembly for consideration with a recommendation for adoption
- Resolution #2 – Referred to the Synod Council and will be reported as information to the Assembly
- Resolution #3 – Referred to the Assembly for consideration with no recommendation.
- Resolution #4 – Referred to the Assembly for consideration with a recommendation for adoption.

It is still possible for you to submit resolutions to the 2013 Assembly. Please submit your request in the form of a resolution to Lorraine Jordan (jordan@seiasynod.org) at the Southeastern Iowa Synod Center for Ministry. Pursuant to S7.51.04, resolutions received less than forty-five days prior to the Synod Assembly shall be reported to the Assembly as information. At the discretion of the RC Committee these resolutions may be referred to the Assembly for consideration. A resolution reported to the Assembly by the RC Committee as information may be taken up by the Assembly for consideration following a two-thirds vote of the Assembly to do so. Otherwise, all resolutions that are reported to the Assembly as information shall be referred to the Synod Council.

For assistance with a resolution or further information feel free to contact any of the RC Committee members via their congregation.

Members
Alice Barrett (Windsor Heights Lutheran Church, Windsor Heights)
Pastor Tim Olson (Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Ankeny)
Jay Schwake (St. John’s Lutheran Church, Ely)
Leon Schwartz (Chair, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Winterset)
Vicky Strom (Gilbert Lutheran Church, Gilbert)
Pastor Sharon Worthington (Grand View Lutheran Church, Des Moines)
Bishop Michael Burk, Ex Officio

Advisory Members
Pastor Eric Carlson, Synod Staff Liaison
Pastor Lyle Kleman, 2013 Assembly Parliamentarian
Lorraine Jordan. Administrative Assistant to the Bishop

We are here to serve you and the needs of the 2013 Assembly. We hope you find our service of assistance in the process of discernment concerning God’s call to us as a synod.

Respectfully submitted,

Leon J. Schwartz
Resolution #1 Southeastern Iowa Assembly 2013

WHEREAS, The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) 2009 Churchwide Assembly resolved to “commit itself to finding ways to allow congregations that choose to do so to recognize, support and hold publicly accountable lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships”;

WHEREAS, Same-gender civil marriage is legal in the state of Iowa; and

WHEREAS, Clarity regarding local practice contributes to respecting communities and individuals who, in keeping with the 2009 Churchwide Assembly decision regarding same-gender relationships, hold different faith-informed views on these matters; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Southeastern Iowa Synod recognizes that congregations that choose to do so, may develop clear and consistent policies allowing pastors serving those congregations under call or contract to preside at the service uniting any persons who are legally able to be married in the state of Iowa, should the pastor’s own bound conscience allow for it; and

RESOLVED, That pastors called to specialized ministry and serving on the territory of the Southeastern Iowa Synod may preside at the service uniting any persons who are legally able to be married in the state of Iowa on behalf of congregations with such policies in place, should the bound conscience of the pastor in specialized ministry allow for it.

Respectfully submitted by

Pastor Paul Finger (Saints Peter & Paul, Monticello; St. John, Hopkinton)
Pastor Linda Livingston (Ascension, Marion)
Pastor Ritva Williams (St. Stephen’s, Cedar Rapids)
Pastor Cindy Ford Breed (University Hospitals, Iowa City)
Pastor Jo Kinnard (Holy Redeemer, Cedar Rapids)
The Congregation Council of St. Andrew Evangelical Lutheran Church (Cedar Rapids)
Chris Formanek, President of St. Andrew Evangelical Lutheran Church (Cedar Rapids)
Pastor T. Edwards Breed (St. Andrew’s, Cedar Rapids)

Reference and Counsel recommends adoption.
Resolutions

Resolution #2 Southeastern Iowa Assembly 2013

WHEREAS, One of our former Bishops has been designated as “Bishop Emeritus” and the other has not; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Synod Council develop a consistent policy regarding the granting of this title to all Bishops who have served our synod honorably.

Respectfully submitted by

Pastor Wendell Debner, Faith Lutheran Church, Marion, Iowa

Reference and Counsel referred Resolution #2 to the Synod Council.
WHEREAS, The prolonged Israeli occupation of and Israeli settlement building in the West Bank and East Jerusalem remain obstacles to peace and cause a great deal of suffering for Israelis and Palestinians;

WHEREAS, The ELCA gives thanks for our special relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), which is marked by mutual love and concern for lasting peace with justice, and rejoices that our Palestinian brother in Christ, Bishop Munib Younan, is president of the Lutheran World Federation;

WHEREAS, The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Peace Not Walls campaign focuses on accompaniment, awareness-raising, and advocacy as three aspects of engagement in response to the Israel-Palestine situation;

WHEREAS, The 2011 Churchwide Assembly adopted a resolution supporting positive investment in Palestinian goods and services and commending the “ELCA Economic Social Criteria Investment Screens” to its members, congregations, synods, and agencies;

WHEREAS, The 1995 ELCA social statement, For Peace in God’s World, reminds us that seeking peace with justice is the church’s proper work and recognizes that in pursuing just political structures “the responsible use of [economic] sanctions may on occasion be the most effective and least harmful measure to lead states to stop [oppressive behavior]”; and

WHEREAS, On October 5, 2012, fifteen (15) U.S. Christian leaders, including ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson, signed a letter urging Congress to “undertake careful scrutiny to ensure that our aid is not supporting actions by the government of Israel that undermine prospects for peace”; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That we affirm the ELCA Peace Not Walls campaign as the means by which the ELCA implements its strategy for engagement in the Holy Land conflict and affirm our support for sisters and brothers in the ELCJHL as they remain faithful to the Gospel amid Israeli occupation;

RESOLVED, That we encourage members of congregations of the Southeastern Iowa Synod to listen to our Palestinian sisters and brothers through study of the Kairos Palestine document; to visit the region and speak directly with Israelis and Palestinians; and to seek resources such as those provided by the ELCA Peace Not Walls campaign that share current, reliable information about the situation;
RESOLVED, That we ask the bishop and members of congregations of the Southeastern Iowa Synod to contact their representatives in Congress, urging them, as requested in the October 5, 2012 letter from fifteen Christian leaders, to undertake careful scrutiny by holding hearings examining whether Israel’s use of U.S. financial aid violates the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act and Arms Export Control Act;

RESOLVED, That the 2013 Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly memorializes the 2013 Churchwide Assembly to call for the ELCA to explore and implement social economic investment screens that pertain specifically to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and companies that profit from the Israeli occupation; and

RESOLVED, That the 2013 Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly memorializes the 2013 Churchwide Assembly to request that the ELCA churchwide organization provide information to ELCA members regarding companies that profit from the Israeli occupation so members and congregations can make informed selective purchasing decisions.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Ms. Christine Cowan, TSSF, Ecumenical Accompanier, World Council of Churches, Fall 2011
Pastoral Intern, Bethesda Lutheran Church
Rev. Randall Gehring, Lead Pastor, Bethesda Lutheran Church, Ames, IA
Rev. Kathy Gerking, Interim Senior Pastor, St. Stephens Lutheran Church, Urbandale, IA
Rev. Russell J. A. Melby, Member, Church and Society Commission, World Hunger Working Group
Rev. Jen Andreas, Pastor, Lord of Life Lutheran Church & University Lutheran Student Center Ames, IA
Mr. William Vogel, Member, Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Ames, IA
Meg Strohmer Kiekhaefer, Zion Lutheran Church, Iowa City, IA
Rev. Dr. Mark Pries, Pastor, Zion Lutheran Church, Iowa City, IA

Reference and Counsel has no recommendation.
Resolution #4 Southeastern Iowa Assembly 2013

WHEREAS, The Southeastern Iowa Synod seeks to be known as an anti-hunger synod;
WHEREAS, The Hunger Appeal of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) seeks to alleviate hunger through education, relief, development and advocacy;
WHEREAS, Funds provided through the ELCA Hunger Appeal have made it possible to expand advocacy efforts through Lutheran Day on the Hill;
WHEREAS, The ELCA participates in non-partisan advocacy efforts, especially toward the goal of overcoming the effects and root causes of hunger and poverty;
WHEREAS, The ELCA is a charter member of the Circle of Protection, a coalition committed to resist budget cuts that undermine the lives, dignity and rights of poor and vulnerable people at home and abroad;
WHEREAS, Over thirty-five (35) congregations of the Southeastern Iowa Synod have sponsored or have plans to sponsor reading groups for the book Exodus from Hunger (the READing to End Hunger Project); and
WHEREAS, The Rev. David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World and World Food Prize laureate, is a featured speaker at this synod assembly; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Southeastern Iowa Synod gathered in assembly express its sincere thanks to the Rev. David Beckmann for his leadership in addressing hunger and its root causes;

RESOLVED, That the Southeastern Iowa Synod gathered in assembly encourages congregations that have not already participated in the READing to End Hunger project to participate in this opportunity before the end of 2013;
RESOLVED, That the Southeastern Iowa Synod gathered in assembly encourage congregations and individual members of this synod to find ways to involve themselves in the work of advocating for people who are hungry and who live in poverty or near poverty both in this nation and around the world by utilizing resources provided by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America at [www.elca.org/advocacy](http://www.elca.org/advocacy) and [www.elca.org/hunger](http://www.elca.org/hunger), and through Bread for the World at [www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org); and

RESOLVED, That congregations and individuals be encouraged to continue and expand this synod’s generous support of the Hunger Appeal of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Respectfully submitted by

The Commission for Church in Society and its Hunger Working Group

Reference and Counsel recommends adoption.