

## **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 three resolutions submitted by the April 4, 2017 deadline. These resolutions have been reviewed, acted upon, and readied for presentation at the Assembly.

It is still possible for resolutions to be submitted to the 2017 Assembly. Please submit your request in the form of a resolution to Lorraine Jordan ([jordan@seiasynod.org](mailto: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, contact Pastor Eric Carlson at [Carlson@seiasynod.org](mailto:Carlson@seiasynod.org)

### **Members**

The Rev. Michael Schmidt (Grace Lutheran Church, Des Moines)  
Judy Huenke-Kremer (St. John's Lutheran Church, St. Donatus)  
Dave Hanson (Zion Lutheran Church, Muscatine)  
Ben Matthies (Augustana Lutheran Church, Boone)  
The Rev. Stephanie Malin (Seeds of Faith Lutheran Church, Lisbon)  
Bishop Michael Burk, Ex Officio

### **Advisory Members**

The Rev. Eric Carlson, *Synod Staff Liaison*  
The Rev. Duane Miller, *2016 Assembly Parliamentarian*

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Michael Schmidt

## Resolution #1 Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly

WHEREAS the Southeastern Iowa Synod is an anti-hunger synod; and

WHEREAS the first 1,000 days of life are the most critical for brain development; and

WHEREAS adequate and nutritious food and a loving and nurturing environment can make a difference in whether or not a person will be able to live up to their God-given potential; and

WHEREAS one in five children in Iowa and in the United States is food insecure; and

WHEREAS there is little awareness of these facts in our congregations, in society as a whole, as well as with potential and pregnant mothers; and

WHEREAS scientific research has shown that without proper food and nurture in the first five years of life, a child is already behind the minimum benchmarks when they get to kindergarten; and

WHEREAS scientific research has shown that lack of adequate and nutritious food and a stressful or traumatic environment brings on more chronic illness later in life than the general population and earlier than the general population; and

WHEREAS scientific research has shown that inadequate nutrition and stress and trauma stunts a child 0-2 years old in both mind and body costing trillions of dollars annually in global gross domestic product (GDP); and

WHEREAS Bread for the World reported in their 2014 report that the United States loses \$160 billion annually in GDP due to the cost of stunted minds and bodies; be it

**RESOLVED** that the Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) direct the synod's Commission for Church in Society to develop a strategy for building awareness about the proper nutritional requirements in the first 1,000 days of life, beginning with conception. This strategy ought to provide a list of resources that educates congregations about the nutritional needs in the first 1,000 days of life and specific suggestions as to how congregations may assist in improving the health and well-being of mothers and children during this critically important time. The synod's Commission for Church in Society will provide a report of this strategy to the 2018 Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly.

*Respectfully Submitted by:*

*Rev. Diana J. Sickles, St. John's Lutheran Church, Des Moines*

*Julie Honsey, Grace Lutheran Church, Des Moines*

*Rev. Vernon Naffier, Capitol Hill Lutheran Church, Des Moines*

*Joyce Naffier, Capitol Hill Lutheran Church, Des Moines*

*Rev. Robert Speirs, St. John's Lutheran Church, Des Moines*

*Kristen Nettelund, Lutheran Church of Hope, West Des Moines*

*Minda Davison Kuckuck, St. Stephen Lutheran Church, Urbandale*

*Rev. Russell Melby, Bethesda Lutheran Church, Ames*

*Rev. Dr. Roland Zimany, Grace Lutheran Church, Des Moines*

*Rev. Dean Baer, St. John's Lutheran Church, Des Moines*

*Recommended for Adoption*

## Resolution #2 Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly

WHEREAS, according to the 1997 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Social Message on Immigration, “Our church also has a history of hospitality for refugees. Following World War II, when one out of every six Lutherans in the world was a refugee or displaced person, Lutherans, with the participation of 6,000 congregations, resettled some 57,000 refugees in the United States. In the decade after the fall of Saigon in 1975, Lutheran congregations sponsored over 50,000 refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. During the 1980s various congregations provided sanctuary for persons whose lives were endangered by wars in Central America.” We are also guided by the overwhelming and consistent witness of Scripture, as Jesus commands us in Matthew 25 to welcome the stranger as a defining practice of our faith; and

WHEREAS, 65.3 million people worldwide are forcibly displaced and 21.3 million people (more than half of these under the age of 18) are designated refugees by the United Nations. This is the highest level of displacement on record. Globally, less than 1 percent of the world’s refugees are ever resettled. In 2016, the United States accepted 85,000 refugees with plans to accept 110,000 in 2017. However, the current White House has stated its intent to cut this number to 50,000 arrivals in 2017 and utilized executive powers to attempt to temporarily halt all refugee resettlement from designated countries. This ban and overall reduction places many of the most vulnerable of these displaced persons into precarious and life-threatening situations, including war, terrorism, sexual violence, brutality, and torture; and

WHEREAS, the United States vetting process for refugees is the most extensive of all nations and refugees are the most thoroughly screened of any foreign-born population entering the United States. Refugees do not apply for resettlement; instead, they are identified by the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as the most vulnerable, those whose life, liberty, safety, health, or other fundamental rights are at risk. The screening process, which sometimes takes place after an individual has spent years in a refugee camp or other site for displaced persons, takes 18 to 24 months and includes eight U.S. federal government agencies, six security databases, five separate background checks, four biometric security checks, three in-person interviews, and two inter-agency security checks; and

WHEREAS, refugees who are embraced by their new home countries have a positive impact upon local communities by contributing workforce skills, cultural diversity, and new perspectives. Research shows that while countries bear the cost burden of supporting refugees upon arrival, refugees add more value to the economy than the original cost of resettling them. Refugees are an upwardly mobile workforce, and are almost twice as likely as native-born U.S. citizens to become entrepreneurs. However, more importantly than the economic capital is the humanitarian capital in which we as Christians are called to invest; and

WHEREAS, a decrease in refugee arrivals to the United States will likely mean loss of federal and state funding to refugee service organizations. These cuts may diminish vital services for refugees already in our community. A reduction of funding would mean the drastic scale-back or closure of English language instruction, work readiness programs, citizenship classes, and other programming designed to empower refugees toward becoming productive members of our society; therefore, be it

**RESOLVED** that the Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly of the ELCA, encourage its bishop, pastors, and congregations to engage in a process of education, conversation, and prayerful discernment regarding the ongoing refugee crisis;

**RESOLVED** that the Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly encourage members of the Southeastern Iowa Synod to live out our biblical mandate to welcome the stranger by advocating to their elected officials for an increase, rather than a decrease, in refugee arrivals to our nation and communities in 2017;

**RESOLVED** that congregations of the Southeastern Iowa Synod are encouraged to reach out in welcome to newly arrived refugees and in kinship toward existing refugee communities;

**RESOLVED** that congregations of the Southeastern Iowa Synod are encouraged to learn more about and support the work of organizations such as Lutheran Services in Iowa and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services who provide programming that benefits, supports, educates, and empowers refugees.

*Respectfully Submitted by:*

*Luis Arredondo, Lutheran Church of Hope, West Des Moines*

*Rev. Minna Bothwell, Capitol Hill Lutheran Church, Des Moines*

*Rev. Mike Housholder, Lutheran Church of Hope, West Des Moines*

*Rev. Chris Olkiewicz, Windsor Heights Lutheran Church, Windsor Heights*

*Rev. Sarah Trone Garriott, Faith Lutheran Church, Clive*

*Recommended for Adoption*

# Resolution #3 Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly

WHEREAS, the United States has always been a nation of immigrants; and

WHEREAS, the immigrant populations of the United States participate, as they have always done, in the building of this nation; and

WHEREAS the United States has a proud history of providing refuge for persons fleeing violence and poverty in their homelands; and

WHEREAS, the United States Immigration law has been tightened to such an extent that it no longer provides a means for most aliens to enter the United States for the purpose of gaining permanent legal status or citizenship; and

WHEREAS, millions of immigrants currently residing in the United States, who have fled to this country from situations of violence and poverty in their home countries, have not been able to obtain legal residency; and

WHEREAS, immigrant families are being torn apart by arrests and deportations, and

WHEREAS, our Lord has taught us to welcome the stranger in our land and to treat him/her as one of our own for inasmuch as we receive the stranger in need we receive the Lord himself; therefore, be it

**RESOLVED** that the Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly encourage members of the Southeastern Iowa Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to contact their legislators and the President of the United States to:

- a. take action to reform the immigration laws of the United States, so that persons wishing to migrate permanently to the United States may do so legally, and
- b. halt detention and deportation of immigrants not guilty of felony until comprehensive immigration policy reform is fully enacted by the Congress, and
- c. enforce a reasonable border policy that ensures both security and humanitarian concern on both sides of the border, and
- d. open a pathway to legal status and citizenship to immigrants who have been residing in this country without legal documentation and who are not felons.

*Respectfully Submitted by:*

*Rev. Vernon H. Naffier, Capitol Hill Lutheran Church, Des Moines*

*Rev. Russ Melby, Bethesda Lutheran Church, Ames*

Resource: [www.elca.org/Our-Work/Publicly-Engaged-Church/Advocacy](http://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Publicly-Engaged-Church/Advocacy)

*Recommended for Adoption*