

1 **Resolution # 1 2021 Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly, Child Protection**

2 WHEREAS, one in eight children in the United States experiences a confirmed case of abuse or
3 neglect before they turn 18, although the actual prevalence of known and unknown abuse is
4 significantly higher; and

5 WHEREAS, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) often have profound and lifelong impacts on
6 children; and

7 WHEREAS, 90 percent of people receiving public mental health services for major mental illnesses
8 have experienced physical, emotional, or sexual abuse in their lives, often as children; and

9 WHEREAS, the Bible and Lutheran theology have sometimes been used to excuse or minimize the
10 abuse of children, to discourage victims of child abuse from seeking evidence-based mental health
11 care, and to violate mandated reporting laws; and

12 WHEREAS, the Bible has often been distorted to justify hitting children of all ages, including
13 infants, and that this violence has been repeatedly shown in research to increase the risk of poor
14 medical and mental health outcomes; and

15 WHEREAS, child protection policies help safeguard children, educate congregations, deter
16 potential offenders, and witness our faith to the world; and

17 WHEREAS, providing abuse survivors with a voice and opportunity to share their experiences will
18 require the church to develop collaborations with professionals trained in recognizing and
19 responding to all forms of child maltreatment and who are willing to consult with faith leaders in
20 coordinating medical, mental health, and spiritual care; and

21 WHEREAS, taking steps to develop a comprehensive training program for the leadership and
22 members of the congregation lays the foundation for a safe environment in which abuse is
23 identified, understood, and addressed promptly and effectively; therefore, be it

24 **RESOLVED** that the Southeastern Iowa Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America
25 (ELCA) in Assembly encourages its members to read and study the “Rationale for a Social
26 Statement on Child Abuse and Child Protection.”¹; and be it further

27 **RESOLVED** that the Southeastern Iowa Synod of the ELCA in Assembly encourages its
28 congregations, synodically authorized worshipping communities, church agencies, and schools, to
29 develop effective and enforceable child protection and child maltreatment policies; and finally be
30 it

31 **RESOLVED** that the Southeastern Iowa Synod of the ELCA in Assembly encourages its
32 congregations to offer opportunities for dialogue and education on effective discipline of children
33 including Bible studies on the Christian obligation to discipline children without the use of corporal
34 punishment.

The Reference and Counsel Committee recommends the adoption of this Resolution.

¹ <http://currentsjournal.org/index.php/currents/article/view/306/335>