

**A RESOLUTION ON THE “BOUND CONSCIENCE” OF THE NORTHEASTERN IOWA
SYNOD WITH RESPECT TO CHANGES IN MINISTRY POLICIES**

WHEREAS, The 2009 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA has adopted 4 Recommendations on Ministry Policies (CA09.05.23; CA09.05.24; CA09.05.26; and CA09.05.27), and

WHEREAS, CA09.05.23 states “**that in the implementation of any resolutions on ministry policies, the ELCA commit itself to bear one another’s burdens, love the neighbor, and respect the bound consciences of all**”, and

WHEREAS, CA09.05.27, in the 2nd “RESOLVED” states “**that this church, because of its commitment to respect the bound consciences of all, declare its intent to allow structured flexibility in decision-making regarding the approving or disapproving in candidacy and the extending or not extending of a call to rostered service of a person who is otherwise qualified and who is living or contemplates living in a publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationship**”, and

WHEREAS, the 5th “WHEREAS” introducing CA.09.05.27 states, “**other members, congregations, candidacy committees, and synods of the ELCA acknowledge those gifts and skills for ministry, but believe that this church must maintain an expectation of celibacy for any gay or lesbian person, whether or not that person is in a publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationship, and thus believe that this church cannot call or roster people in such relationships**” and

WHEREAS, the use of “structured flexibility” is portrayed in the “Report and Recommendation on Ministry Policies” as presented to the Churchwide Assembly on lines 488 – 498 of the Pre-Assembly Report in the following manner:

“To choose structured flexibility does not imply that same-gender-oriented people in publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships would be able to serve everywhere in this church. The existing discernment processes for approval and call already assume that synods, bishops, candidacy committees, rostered leaders, and congregations will make decisions in keeping with their own conscience and convictions. **If structured flexibility were added to the process, this assumption would still protect any congregation, candidacy committee, synod, or bishop from having to violate bound conscience by approving, calling, commissioning, consecrating, or ordaining anyone in a publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationship.** Similarly, a structured flexibility process would protect the decisions of a congregation, candidacy committee, synod, or bishop who concludes that mission would be served best by approving or calling a particular candidate or rostered leader who is in a publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationship.” (bold added), and

WHEREAS, it is evident from these portions of the materials adopted and presented at the 2009 Churchwide Assembly that the “all” whose “bound conscience” the actions of the assembly have committed the ELCA to honor include “synods”, and that this “bound conscience” includes the ability to choose not to approve, call, commission, consecrate, or ordain someone in a publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationship, and

WHEREAS, the “bound conscience” of the Northeastern Iowa Synod can most clearly be determined by the actions taken at synod assembly, and

WHEREAS, actions of the Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly in 2004 (SA04.06.9), 2005 (SA05.06.38), 2007 (SA07.06.33, SA07.06.36, SA07.06.38 & SA07.06.41), and 2009 (SA09.06.15 &

SA09.06.18) have declared the position of the Northeastern Iowa Synod to be that “Marriage, an institution ordained by God, is the life-long union of one man and one woman for the creation of human life and for their mutual love and care... Sexual intercourse is part of the vocation of marriage and is misused in any other context” (SA04.06.9); have opposed any changes in the church’s teaching concerning marriage and sexuality (SA04.06.9, SA09.06.15); and have opposed any changes in the ELCA’s standards for pastors and other rostered leaders as expressed in the 1990 documents “Vision and Expectations” and “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline” (SA05.06.38, SA07.06.36, SA07.06.38, SA07.06.41 & SA09.06.18); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Iowa Synod Council, recognizing the past actions of the Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly as evidence of the Northeastern Iowa Synod’s strongly-held views with respect to the approving, calling, commissioning, consecrating, or ordaining of one in a publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationship, determines that the standards for rostered ministry as outlined in the 1990 documents, “Vision and Expectations” and “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline” shall remain in effect for the Northeastern Iowa Synod, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Iowa Synod Council encourage the Northeastern Iowa Synod Candidacy Committee and the Office of Bishop of the Northeastern Iowa Synod to continue to abide by such standards for rostered ministry in the Northeastern Iowa Synod during the period leading up to the 2010 Synod Assembly, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Iowa Synod Council recommends the following Continuing Resolution to the 2010 Synod Assembly of the Northeastern Iowa Synod:

S14.02 A10 In addition to the standards for ordained ministers in the current “Vision and Expectations” as adopted by the ELCA Church Council, this synod shall continue to maintain this expectation from “Vision & Expectations” (1990) in its candidacy process and in its standards for pastors and other rostered leaders:

Ordained ministers, whether married or single, are expected to uphold an understanding of marriage in their public ministry as well as in private life that is biblically informed and consistent with the teachings of this synod. The expectations of this synod regarding the sexual conduct of its ordained ministers are grounded in the understanding that human sexuality is a gift from God and that ordained ministers are to live in such a way as to honor this gift. Ordained ministers are expected to reject sexual promiscuity, the manipulation of others for purposes of sexual gratification, and all attempts of sexual seduction and sexual harassment, including taking physical or emotional advantage of others. Single ordained ministers are expected to live a chaste life. Married ordained ministers are expected to live in fidelity to their spouses, giving expression to sexual intimacy within a marriage relationship that is mutual, chaste, and faithful. Ordained ministers who are homosexual in their self-understanding are expected to abstain from homosexual sexual relationships.