

### **African Descent Strategist Resolution (19-01)**

WHEREAS, the current the job description and salary of the African Descent Strategist is for 10 hours per week and the responsibilities include staff meetings once a week at the Synod office/Lutheran Center, and

WHEREAS, their job description includes relating, advocacy and support of nine predominately African Descent congregations, which are: Ascension in Los Angeles, Another Level in Gardena, Chapel of Peace in Inglewood, Community in Los Angeles, First Carson in Carson, Holy Trinity in Inglewood, St. Mark in Los Angeles, Messiah in Los Angeles and Olivet In Hawthorne, and

WHEREAS, relating, consultation, advocacy, support, training and continuing education opportunities for the African Descent Pastors; and

WHEREAS, working with the Director of Evangelical Missions (DEM) and assistant to the Bishop for strengthening, revitalization, candidacy and calls for African Descent congregations, and,

WHEREAS, with the travel time to and from the Synod office in Glendale; and

WHEREAS, this being a critical, transitional time for all of our congregations of African Descent, and

WHEREAS, the African Descent Strategist currently averages additional hours of more than (40) forty hours a month,

WHEREAS, the current funding of (10) ten hours per week is received from the African Descent Ministries of the Churchwide office of the ELCA, therefore, be it,

RESOLVED that the Southwest California Synod, provide an additional ten hours per week so that the position of African Descent Strategist totals 20 hours per week, and be it further

RESOLVED that the Council of Southwest California Synod allocate \$10,000 per year for the African Descent Strategist for an additional (10) hours for African Descent Strategist.

Pastor Jonathan Hemphill

Pastor Rodrick Hines

Pastor John Miller

Pastor James Phillips

Pastor LB Tatum

Pastor Tracy Williams

19-01 (cont.)

- a) The passing of the resolution will require a new financial commitment from this year's proposed Synod budget. It is not known at this time the particular resource that would be up to the Synod Council. Also individual donors, congregations and organizations within the Southwest California Synod could perhaps be solicited.
- b) The additional hours would now be formally written into the contract of the African Descent Strategist and he/she would receive compensation for the additional hours. The Bishop would be responsible to implement the resolution.
- c) This resolution would demonstrate encouragement and commitment for all of our congregations in this Synod to continue to receive the gifts of God that come through members and congregations of African Descent. Also this resolution passed would send a message to all those outside of the Christians community that we of the ELCA value and celebrate ethnic diversity and the particular rich heritage of African American, creating new opportunities for expanding our African Descent ministries in this Synod.

## Offering Options to Curb Overpopulation and Overconsumption (19-02)

WHEREAS, overpopulation and overconsumption of natural resources are the primary drivers of the current and ongoing Creation Crisis, which some euphemistically call “climate change” or “global warming.” (“Creation Crisis” is a faith-based term that implies that all life on Earth is at risk.)

AND WHEREAS, both overpopulation and overconsumption are issues that humans can do something about; therefore, be it

RESOLVED that we of the SWCA Synod commit ourselves to offer options to curb overpopulation globally and overconsumption, especially in the US; and be it further

RESOLVED that we memorialize the ELCA at the next Church-wide assembly to commit the ELCA to the same; and be it further

RESOLVED that we urge ELCA World Hunger and Disaster Relief to adopt and implement projects to offer options to curb overpopulation and overconsumption—to our members, synods, agencies and partner organizations and denominations.

Deacon Gerald “Jerry” Iversen, Member, Bethel ELCA, Templeton, CA (primary author)

Rita Iversen, Member, Bethel ELCA, Templeton, CA

Paula Wansa, Member, Bethel ELCA, Templeton, CA, Assembly Delegate

Ron Wansa, Member, Bethel ELCA, Templeton, CA, Assembly Delegate

Russ Wyllie, Member, Bethel ELCA, Templeton, CA

Pr. Wendell Brown, Member, Hope ELCA, Atascadero, CA

Steve W. Ladwig, Member, Bethel ELCA, Templeton, CA

Janet Varin, Member, Bethel ELCA, Templeton, CA

Pr. Herbert Warren Alderson, former ELCA Chaplain, CDCRC

### QUESTIONS

I. What is the financial impact of this resolution on our synod budget?

None

II. A. 1. What are the personnel implication within our synod; 2. or churchwide?

1. The bishop may instruct existing staff, in education and communications, as examples, to advance the concepts in the resolution. They may invite members and rostered leaders in the synod to contribute to a pool of information to share with members of the synod via the newsletter, educational curricula, etc.

2. If the resolution is passed at a future churchwide assembly, ELCA World Hunger and Disaster Relief may be instructed by Presiding Bishop and/or national church council to adopt and implement projects to offer options to curb overpopulation and overconsumption to synods, congregations, agencies, other denominations (especially faith partners), interreligious partners, and/or partner organizations of the ELCA.

19-02 (cont.)

II. B. Who will be responsible for implementation of the resolution?

1. The bishop may instruct existing staff, in education and communications, as examples, to advance the concepts in the resolution. They may invite members and rostered leaders in the synod to contribute to a pool of information to share with members of the synod via the newsletter, educational curricula, etc.

Furthermore, the appropriate committee or staff member would advance the resolution to the churchwide assembly.

III. How does this resolution enhance and forward the mission of the church and our synod?

This resolution makes our faith real. It shows that the ELCA's Care of Creation has real consequences, that the ELCA is willing to take on difficult, even controversial issues for the sake of all living species, that the ELCA does not believe that humans can despoil God's Creation for the sake of profit, believing that since Earth is only temporary we can do whatever we want with it because it's going to be destroyed by God eventually anyway! Or even worse that we can bring on the End Times by destroying God's Earth!

## **Resolution in support of single-payer improved Medicare for All (19-03)**

WHEREAS, our ELCA Social Statement titled Caring for Health: Our Shared Endeavor states the following: “In light of these biblical and theological perspectives, (such as the story of the good Samaritan) we address the health crisis in the United States with the disjointed health care services, its high costs of treatment, and its failure to provide access for many”, and

WHEREAS, 28.5 million Americans lacked health insurance in 2017 (1), and

WHEREAS, compared to ten other high-income countries, the U.S. ranks last in health care affordability, and has the highest rate of infant mortality and mortality amenable to health care (2), and

WHEREAS, employer-sponsored health plans are increasingly unaffordable for workers since 85% of these plans include an annual deductible and the average deductible was \$1,573 for single coverage in 2018 (3), and

WHEREAS, in 2017 the U.S. spent \$3.7 trillion on health care, or 17.9% of GDP (4), twice as much per capita on health care as the average of wealthy nations that provide universal coverage (5), and

WHEREAS, illness and medical bills contribute to 66.5% of all bankruptcies, a figure that is virtually unchanged since before the passage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), and 530,000 families suffer bankruptcies each year that are linked to illness or medical bills (6), and

WHEREAS, overhead consumes 12.2% of private insurance premiums (7), while the overhead of fee-for-service Medicare is less than 2% (8), and

WHEREAS, providers are forced to spend tens of billions more dealing with insurers’ billing and documentation requirements (9), bringing total administrative costs to 31% of U.S. health spending, compared to 16.7% in Canada (10), and

WHEREAS, the U.S. could save over \$500 billion annually on administrative costs with a single-payer system (11), and

WHEREAS, billing-driven documentation that contributes to physician burnout would be greatly reduced under a single-payer reform (12), and

19-03 (cont.)

WHEREAS, the savings from slashing bureaucracy would be enough to cover all of the uninsured and eliminate cost sharing for everyone else (13), and

WHEREAS, a single-payer system could control costs through proven-effective mechanisms such as global budgets for hospitals and negotiated drug prices (14), thereby making health care financing sustainable, and

WHEREAS, a single-payer reform will reduce malpractice lawsuits and insurance costs because injured patients won't have to sue for coverage of future medical expenses, and

WHEREAS, a single-payer system would facilitate health planning, directing capital funds to build and expand health facilities where they are needed, rather than being driven by the dictates of the market, and

WHEREAS, a single-payer reform will dramatically reduce, although not eliminate, health disparities. The passage of Medicare in 1965 led to the rapid desegregation of 99.6% of U.S. hospitals (15), and

WHEREAS, a single-payer system will allow patients to freely choose their doctors, gives physicians a choice of practice setting, and protect the doctor patient relationship, and

WHEREAS, there is single-payer legislation in both houses of Congress, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the Southwest California Synod encourage its congregations and members to support and advocate for universal access to comprehensive, affordable, high-quality health care through a single-payer national health program, including single-payer legislation at the state level.

Sharon Heck, St. Mark's, Hacienda Heights

Jane Affonso, First, Torrance

Ross McConnell, Trinity, Pasadena

Karen Smallfoot, Hill Avenue Grace, Pasadena

Lillian Simmons, Good Shepherd, Los Angeles

Deborah Moisio, St. Stephens of the Valley, Palmdale

Dean W. Nelson, First, Torrance

Dixie Hanson, Holy Trinity, Thousand Oaks

Robert McDuff, Central, Van Nuys

Scott Bartlett, Bethel, Los Angeles

19-03 (cont.)

Gordon Henry, Mt. Cross, Camarillo

Melissa Henry, Mt. Cross, Camarillo

Marsha E. Harris, Central, Van Nuys

Peg Schultz-Akerson, Lutheran Church of the Master, Los Angeles

## References

1. "Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2017," U.S. Census Bureau, September 2018.
2. Schneider, et al., "Mirror, Mirror 2017: International comparison reflects flaws and opportunities for better U.S. health care," Commonwealth Fund, July 17, 2017.
3. Claxton, et al., "Health benefits in 2018: Modest growth in premiums, higher worker contributions at firms with more low-wage workers," Health Affairs, October 2018.
4. "National Health Expenditures Fact Sheet 2017," U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, December 2018.

19-03 (cont.)

5. Sawyer and Cox, "How does health spending in the U.S. compare to other countries?" Kaiser Family Foundation, December 7, 2018.
6. Himmelstein, et al., "Medical bankruptcy: Still common despite the Affordable Care Act," American Journal of Public Health, March 1, 2019.
7. National Health Expenditure Accounts, U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, December 2018.
8. 2018 Annual Report of the Boards of Trustees of the Federal Hospital Insurance and Federal Supplementary Medical Insurance Trust Funds, June 2018.
9. Morra, et al., "U.S. physician practices versus Canadians: spending nearly four times as much money interacting with payers," Health Affairs, August 2011.
10. Woolhandler, et al., "Costs of health administration in the U.S. and Canada," NEJM, September 21, 2003.
11. Woolhandler and Himmelstein, "Single-payer reform: The only way to fulfill the President's pledge of more coverage, better benefits, and lower costs," Annals of Internal Medicine, April 2017.
12. Downing, et al., "Physician burnout in the electronic health record era: Are we ignoring the real cause?" Annals of Internal Medicine, July 3, 2018.
13. Pollin, et al., "Economic analysis of Medicare for All," Political Economy Research Institute, University of Massachusetts-Amherst, November 30, 2018.
14. Marmor and Oberlander, "From HMOs to ACOs: The quest for the Holy Grail in U.S. health policy," Journal of General Internal Medicine, March 13, 2012.

19-03 (cont.)

15. Himmelstein and Woolhandler, “Medicare’s rollout vs. Obamacare’s glitches brew,” Health Affairs blog, January 2, 2014.

A) What is the financial impact of this resolution on our synod budget?

None

B) What are the personnel implications within our synod – or churchwide? Who will be responsible for the implementation of the resolution?

Education and advocacy are what is needed for this resolution to be implemented. The Mission Team for Justice could do some of the activity as could other mostly lay groups. Staff could have an educational role.