

The following resolution was adopted by the 2011 Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly during its Spring Session on May 6-7 at the National Conference Center in Leesburg, Virginia. "Whereas" clauses are listed as background for Voting Members. The Assembly votes on "Resolved" clauses only.

Policies on Child Protection and Sexual Misconduct

- Whereas, issues of sexual abuse and harassment are emotionally painful and divisive for individuals, families, and communities; and
- Whereas, more than 125,910 people were victims of sexual assault or rape in 2009 (*Bureau of Justice Statistics – National Crime Victimization Survey - October 2010, NCJ 231327*); and
- Whereas, responding to allegations of sexual offenses within the congregation is a legal issue, as well as an issue that requires a pastoral approach to communication, protection of children within the faith community, as well as healing and faith development for all involved, including the offender; and
- Whereas, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and other Christians, including denominations which are full communion partners with the ELCA, have developed policies and procedures to both inform and support leaders and congregations in their response (such as the United Methodist program “Safe Sanctuaries”); therefore be it
- Resolved, that the ELCA Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly direct the bishop of the synod to:
- (1) provide resources for congregations of the Synod to support congregation leaders in raising awareness of sexual abuse and sexual harassment issues and responses within their congregations as they seek to make theirs a safe place for victims of such abuse;
 - (2) provide guidance to congregations in developing a Child Protection Policy and Sexual Harassment/Sexual Abuse policies;
 - (3) designate a team of advisors from the synod to be available to the synod and congregations in responding to allegations of child/adult sexual abuse or harassment.
 - (4) develop Child Protection and Sexual Harassment/Abuse policies for the synod applicable to synod-sponsored events, such as youth retreats, assemblies, and meetings.