

The following resolution was adopted by the 2013 Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly which met on June 21-22, 2013 at the National Conference Center in Leesburg, Virginia. "Whereas" clauses are listed as background for Voting Members. The Assembly votes on "Resolved" clauses only.

RESOLUTION ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE

WHEREAS, in April 2013 a Proposed Social Policy *The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the Cries* was approved by the ELCA Church Council for presentation at the August 2013 Churchwide Assembly, and

WHEREAS, this Statement resulted from an earlier Draft Policy Statement on Criminal Justice which was reviewed and commented upon by many throughout the church; and

WHEREAS, this Proposed Social Policy reflects the input of commentary by members of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod as well as others throughout the church, and

WHEREAS, there is evidence that concern regarding inequities and inefficiencies of the US criminal justice system has been receiving considerable discussion in the public forum, for example:

- An increasing number of civic advocates have called for a comprehensive review of the effectiveness, efficacy and justice of the U.S. prison system;
- The United States Sentencing Commission has called for a return to judicial discretion for many crimes now covered under mandatory sentencing guidelines that have resulted in a drastic increase in the number and duration of incarcerations; and
- The ELCA was a signatory organization supporting the passage of the Second Chance Act of 2008, which provides for increased services to prevent recidivism and to assist former prisoners to make successful transitions to community life; and

WHEREAS, a series of implementing resolutions regarding the Proposed Social Policy *The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the Cries* will be presented to voting members of the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in August, 2013, be it therefore,

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in assembly, express gratitude to the ELCA Task Force on Criminal Justice for the good work done in developing *The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the Cries*, and be further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in assembly extend its efforts to discuss and articulate an effective and faithful approach to criminal justice in our society today by doing the following:

- A. Encourage synod-wide and/or regional gatherings of persons and organizations that have long been active in criminal justice reform and services, to raise awareness and develop working relationships among our members and the wider community

- B. Facilitate the use of social media (e.g., the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod website, web-conferencing, Facebook, and so forth) to facilitate networking and dissemination of knowledge regarding the issues raised in the Proposed Statement so as to equip our membership and others of good will for ministry and advocacy concerning criminal justice ; and

- C. Encourage congregations of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod to commit themselves to pray for healing, justice and reconciliation for all touched by the criminal justice system, including those who work in and set policy, crime victims, those incarcerated and their families.