

The following resolution was adopted by the 2016 Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly which met on June 18, 2016 at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Gaithersburg, Maryland. "Whereas" clauses are listed as background for Voting Members. The Assembly votes on "Resolved" clauses only.

REPUDIATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF DISCOVERY

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) confesses with our Native sisters and brothers that the whole of Creation is God's work, that God declares it all as good, and that God's Spirit dwells within it, and

WHEREAS, we confess that Jesus Christ became incarnate in human form to show God's love and mercy to all humanity, in all its variety, and to every race and people on every continent of the earth, and

WHEREAS, we acknowledge with pain and regret the damage done to the indigenous inhabitants of the Americas by the European conquest and migration to what Europeans called a "new world," but which was in reality already the homeland of many peoples, and

WHEREAS, we recognize that Christian churches were and remain complicit in that conquest migration and dispossession, and that Christian churches helped develop conceptions of Native peoples that blamed them for their own ills and that continue to perpetuate prejudice and injustice against them and their descendants, and

WHEREAS, we deplore and reject the so-called "doctrine of discovery" originated with Pope Alexander VI in 1493 and entrenched in U.S. federal law in *Johnson v. McIntosh* (1823), that Native inhabitants have no property or any other rights which colonizing European nations and their sovereigns are bound to respect. This principle promotes the myth that the Americas were a largely empty land that European conquerors and migrants had a right to claim, occupy, and possess simply by virtue of their Christianity and their European civilization.

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) and the ELCA's full communion partners--the Episcopal Church, the United Church of Christ, the United Methodist Church and the Moravian Church--have publicly repudiated the "doctrine of discovery;" therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly offers herewith a statement of repentance and reconciliation to Native nations in this country for damage done in the name of Christianity and "civilization," and memorialize the METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C. SYNOD ASSEMBLY Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Gaithersburg, Maryland June 18, 2016 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to repudiate the "doctrine of discovery," repent of the damage done in the name of the European Christian-derived "doctrine of discovery" and of complicity in the evils of colonialism in the Americas, seeking reconciliation with Native nations in this country by:

- directing the ELCA Office of the Presiding Bishop to plan an appropriate ELCA national ceremony of repentance and reconciliation with tribal leaders, and provide resources

for similar synodical and congregational observances with local tribal leaders, at all such times and places as are appropriate; and

- directing the ELCA Church Council, with the help of Native communities, to commit the ELCA to the development of resources, in the next triennium, to help its congregations and people understand and reduce the negative impact of the “doctrine of discovery” and its consequences for Native people in North America; and
- directing the ELCA Domestic Mission Unit to bring forward to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly a renewed strategy for ministry with Native people in the ELCA and accompaniment with North American Native communities in general, with a particular commitment to long-term, stable funding of ELCA American Indian and Alaskan Native ministries, increasing partnerships with congregations and synods in the ELCA, and promoting efforts with the Native communities within which our congregations and synods reside.