

***A Memorial Calling the Church to Speak and Act to Prevent Bullying, Harassment and Related Violence***

**Whereas**, “*If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.*” (1Cor. 12:26); and

**Whereas**, in the *ELCA Social Statement on Education* (2007) we declared, “*The ELCA expects communities of learning and teaching to be safe places. We recognize that school safety is an issue for all students, staff, and teachers. Unfortunately, incidents of bullying, intimidation, and other forms of violence are not unusual. We affirm that personal safety and security are essential for optimal teaching and learning*”; and

**Whereas**, research indicates children with disabilities or special needs are at a higher risk of being bullied than others (Rigby, K., 2002, *New Perspective on Bullying*. London. Jessica Kingsley Publications); and has concluded that *Bullying around issues of sexual orientation, non-conforming gender behaviors, and dress was the most common form of bullying, second only to issues of appearance (e.g., body size and disability).*” (The National School Climate Survey, conducted in 2005); and

**Whereas**, in the *ELCA Social Statement on Sexuality: Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* (2009) we declared, “*Likewise, it will attend to the particular needs of children and the families of those with actual or perceived differences in sexual orientation or gender identity because they are especially vulnerable to verbal, physical, emotional, spiritual, psychological, and sexual abuse.*”; and

**Whereas** increased media attention has made us acutely aware of tragic consequences (including youth suicide) if steps are not taken to prevent bullying, harassment, and other related forms of violence; and

**Whereas**, the voice of the church addressing the intersection of race, economic status, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, and physical ability is a powerful witness to the healing and life affirming Gospel promise;

**BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED . . .**

**Be it resolved** that Rocky Mountain Synod memorializes the 2011 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to encourage, support, and publicize new partnerships in ministry that emerge in our church addressing the prevention of bullying, harassment, and related forms of violence, especially with higher risk populations.

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