**Resolution Submission Form**

**2016 Rocky Mountain Synod Assembly**

**RESOLUTION TITLE: Official Statement of Welcome of the Rocky Mountain Synod, ELCA**

**Whereas,** the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* clearly proclaim that “this church, in faithfulness to the Gospel, is committed to be an inclusive church in the midst of division in society," and that "the congregations, synods, and churchwide units of this church shall seek to exhibit the inclusive unity that is God’s will for the Church” (5.01b); and

**Whereas**, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and in the name of Jesus, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Rocky Mountain Synod, ELCA share an ongoing commitment to justice work in the world and communities in which we live; and that ongoing commitment to justice work necessarily includes justice and advocacy work alongside people from historically marginalized communities; and

**Whereas,** the Rocky Mountain Synod, ELCA, in faithfulness to the Gospel, and in faithfulness to that same commitment to be an inclusive church, sought in 1993 to become a Reconciling in Christ synod; and

**Whereas,** the Rocky Mountain Synod, ELCA, having forwarded Resolution #2 to Lutherans Concerned/North America (doing business as ReconcilingWorks; Lutherans for Full Participation) in 1993, has been recognized as a Reconciling in Christ synod since that time; and

**Whereas,** in baptism without stipulations or conditions we have been made new; and through communion, the very sacraments that proclaim that same unconditional grace to the world, we find ourselves united as many different members of the one body of Christ; and

**Whereas,** we, the communities of the Rocky Mountain Synod, ELCA have experienced the magnificent and outrageous welcome of God and have tasted the free gifts of God's unconditional grace; and God’s outrageous and unconditional welcome has transformed us;

**Therefore, Be It Resolved:** That the Rocky Mountain Synod, ELCA shall, in faithfulness to the continued and pressing need for the church, in all of its varied and faithful expressions, to extend a specific welcome to historically marginalized people and communities, adopt the following as their official statement of welcome:

*“We as the Rocky Mountain Synod, ELCA welcome all into the fullness of God’s love. This welcome is inclusive of people of every race, national origin, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, physical or mental ability, sex, or station in life. Rather than using our differences to divide us, we pledge to use our differences as gifts for our work together.”*

**Be it Further Resolved,** that, ongoing, the official statement of welcome shall appear on the Rocky Mountain Synod, ELCA website, synod assembly and theological conference materials, and all other future official publications and communications of the Rocky Mountain Synod, ELCA. Where appropriate, the rainbow flag, trans\* flag, Reconciling in Christ logo and/or the phrase “a Reconciling in Christ synod” may be used in lieu of the welcoming statement.

**Be it Further Resolved**, that the Rocky Mountain Synod, ELCA candidacy committee provide LGBTQ seminarians and those going through the Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM) and/or candidacy process with accompaniment resources, including referral to Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries’ Candidacy and Call Accompaniment Program, and that the Rocky Mountain Synod, ELCA provide workshop-style inclusivity training at synod assembly for the Office of the Bishop staff, Rocky Mountain Synod, ELCA candidacy committee members, Rocky Mountain Synod, ELCA Synod Council, Rocky Mountain Synod, ELCA conference deans, as well as other rostered and non-rostered leaders who desire to participate in such training. Newly hired and/or newly called office of the bishop staff persons would be expected to participate in such training events when they are next offered at an assembly.

Such trainings should be similar to (but would not be limited to) the *Building an Inclusive Church* training as offered by ReconcilingWorks: Lutherans for Full Participation, and would take place during workshop/elective time(s) during synod assembly. Such trainings shall occur every four years, or upon the election of a new bishop and/or significant staffing changes in the Office of the Bishop.

**Be it Further Resolved,** that, in continued faithfulness to Resolution #2 (1993) the congregations and other ministry sites of this synod shall continue to be encouraged to become Reconciling in Christ, making use of such appropriate materials for their study and deliberation as are available from ReconcilingWorks: Lutherans for Full Participation. Likewise, a copy of this resolution shall be forwarded by the Office of the Bishop to ReconcilingWorks: Lutherans for Full Participation*.*

**Implications of Resolution (if adopted):**

1. What is the financial impact of this resolution on the synod budget? If expenditures are required, what are the sources of income anticipated to accomplish the purpose of the resolution?

This resolution applies to all future communications and/or publications of the Rocky Mountain Synod, ELCA. As such there would be minimal time involved in including the official statement of welcome (and/or a flag, flags, or logo/phrase representative of the welcoming statement) in all Rocky Mountain Synod, ELCA publications and communications ongoing. There would be no cost incurred for including this text or these images/logos ongoing. Existing publications shall be used and updated to include the welcoming statement (or the rainbow flag, trans\* flag, Reconciling in Christ logo and/or the phrase “a Reconciling in Christ synod”) as feasible and/or when new supplies need to be ordered.

Holding inclusivity trainings at synod assembly (every four years, or upon the election of a new bishop and/or significant staffing changes in the Office of the Bishop) will minimize travel and time expenses for potential participants. Holding such trainings at synod assembly also serves to maximize the number of persons who would be able to participate in such a training.

As such, inclusivity training (at future synod assemblies) would take the form of a workshop during the assembly and would be elective, not mandatory in nature for synod assembly participants. Newly hired and/or newly called office of the bishop staff persons would be expected to participate in such training events when they are next offered at an assembly. Costs related to the inclusivity training would be factored into the cost of the assembly, just as any other speaker, workshop, or presenter is paid out of the income from the assembly registration fee.

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

Rocky Mountain Synod, ELCA staff shall include this welcoming statement on all future official synod publications and communications (including, but not limited to, the Rocky Mountain Synod, ELCA website, the weekly eConnection newsletter, future publications for synod assembly and theological conference, conference gatherings, etc.)

If space/formatting does not allow for the entire welcoming statement to appear, the phrase “a Reconciling in Christ synod” or a symbol representative of the LGBTQ community may be included instead (i.e. a rainbow flag, the trans\* flag, etc...see above for details).

The chair of the Rocky Mountain Synod, ELCA candidacy committee shall ensure that LGBTQ seminarians and those going through the TEEM and/or candidacy process be provided with accompaniment resources, including referral to Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries’ Candidacy and Call Accompaniment Program.

Synod staff and leadership normally tasked with creating and editing synod-wide publications and communications would simply include the official welcoming statement in those same publications ongoing.

Synod staff would also forward a copy of the resolution and welcoming statement to ReconcilingWorks; Lutherans for Full Participation.

Rev. Andrew Boesenecker will work, with a team, and in cooperation with the Office of the Bishop, in order to coordinate the inclusivity training at synod assembly events (see above for the timeline for such trainings and anticipated costs).

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

This resolution, in faithfulness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and in accordance with the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, stands as a visible witness to the intentional and specific welcome the Rocky Mountain Synod, ELCA, a Reconciling in Christ synod, will continue to extend to all people. This visible, faithful witness to the unconditional love of God is especially important at synod-wide events and in synod-wide publications where diverse groups of people gather together for the sake of our common mission together. While specifically intended to invite the full-participation of vulnerable and marginalized people and communities, the whole body of Christ is edified and enriched by the inclusion of voices and peoples that have been historically marginalized by the church and wider society. This welcoming statement stands as a visible sign of the promise of unconditional welcome, love and affirmation that all people encounter in Christ Jesus.

**Submitted by** (required):

 Mustard Seed House Churches (Northern Colorado)

**Signature Representing (Name of Congregation or Group) and City**

Rev. Andrew Boesenecker

**Name (Please print)**

**Provide names of ALL co-signers:**

Debra Elstad

Nicole Garcia

Don Kreger

Diana Linden-Johnson

Rev. Kevin Maly

Rev. David Nichols

Rev. Asher O’Callaghan