

# ELCA DEAF COMMUNITY

Social Policy Resolution  
CA93.08.107



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.

## Adopted by the 1993 Churchwide Assembly.

### Whereas

To refer the following resolution to the Church Council for appropriate action after conferring with the person who submitted the resolution, the Division for Church in Society, and the Commission for Multicultural Ministries; and

To request that a response regarding ministry with the deaf community be transmitted to the 1995 Churchwide Assembly.

Whereas, the language and culture of the deaf population is unlike any in this nation; and

Whereas, the language of the deaf, American Sign Language (ASL), is truly a language other than English, being strongly based in a French signing system, and is the primary language of members of the deaf culture; and

Whereas, specialized ministry, skills, and sensitivity are necessary to reach this population; and

Whereas, four years ago the deaf community asked the Churchwide Assembly to view them not as "persons with handicapping conditions" but rather as a unique and diverse community and as such to be "inclusive" in the work of the church through the efforts of the Commission for Multicultural Ministries; and

Whereas, this was subsequently addressed by the Church Council at its April 1991 meeting affirming the uniqueness of the deaf community and then resolved to take a "multi-unit" approach leaving the Division for Social Ministry Organizations or its successor carrying the responsibility; and

Whereas, this approach has continued to confuse this issue of the deaf as either a community or as individuals with handicapping conditions; and

Whereas, further attempts were made by the deaf community at the 1991 Churchwide Assembly, to ensure that a desk position be created for deaf ministry to serve the deaf community by advocating the "multicultural" approach to this ministry; and

Whereas, the Division for Social Ministry Organizations or its successor unit has chosen not to create a desk position because or its successor unit has chosen not to create a

desk position because of financial constraints; and

Whereas, Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America at its recent assembly enthusiastically recognized deaf culture as a culture of its own and America Sign Language (ASL) as the primary language of this culture; and

Whereas, the Metropolitan Chicago Synod has successfully included the deaf community in its Commission for Multicultural Ministries for several years; therefore, be it

**Resolved**

RESOLVED, that the 1993 Churchwide Assembly, after hearing several years of prayerful requests from the deaf community, open its arms to this unique community, to affirm this ministry by giving it the visibility and "voice" of being one of the five emphasis groups in the Commission for Multicultural Ministries.