

RURAL CONGREGATIONS

Social Policy Resolution

CA89.08.118



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

Adopted by the 1989 Churchwide Assembly.

Whereas

Whereas, small rural congregations have long been the background of the church at large in areas of support, mission, and leadership; and

Whereas, these communities have in the last years faced the crisis of drought, bank closing, and other realities of the rural crisis with the resultant loss of people and resources; and

Whereas, these churches represent nearly half of all congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

Whereas, small urban congregations are often founded on the roots of older congregations in what were prosperous inner cities but now face urban blight, poverty, the outward movement of business and resources, and the struggle to survive, in order to serve people with limited resources; and

Whereas, the Gospel of Jesus Christ calls us to take seriously this kind of ministry; and

Whereas, we live in a throw-away society where that which is not new is often seen as worthless, used-up, and discardable; and where new is valued more than old, and bigger is often seen as better; and these attitudes reflect negatively on small congregations, both rural and urban; therefore, be it

Resolved

RESOLVED, that the boards, commissions, and leaders of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America affirm the contribution of small rural churches and small urban churches by intentionally naming them and their contributions to the evangelical mission of the Gospel as the church speaks, writes, and prints; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America affirm its commitment to addressing the needs and concerns of small rural and urban congregations and to act on this commitment in the development of materials, programs, and support that speak to the particular needs of small congregations; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that we encourage and support with prayers those people, who chose to minister in these places, so that the church may be ministered to by the immense strength, commitment, and faith of the people in these places.