

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Social Policy Resolution

CA89.08.118



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

Adopted by the 1989 Churchwide Assembly.

Whereas

Whereas, All persons were created by God in the divine image, and human sexuality is a gracious gift of God; and

Whereas, Our baptism into the family of God calls us to stand firmly and pastorally against all forms of abuse and to respect and empower our brothers and sisters in Christ; and

Whereas, Sexual violence of many kinds is widespread in our society (including sexual harassment on the job, rape and sexual assault, incest, and child sexual abuse), and experts estimate that two-fifths of working women experience sexual harassment, two-fifths of all American women experience one or more incidents of sexual assault, and one-third of American children experience sexual abuse before the age of 18; and

Whereas, Sexual harassment and sexual abuse betray God's creation, inflict grievous suffering on the victims, and rend the fabric of the whole community of the people of God; therefore, be it

Resolved

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America commit itself to work to make our church a safe place for all persons by working to eliminate these abuses; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will not tolerate any forms of sexual abuse or harassment by any of its personnel; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that each congregation commit itself to become a safe place, by working to

- a. provide an atmosphere where sexual abuse can be discussed with the freedom and compassion of the Gospel, and where specific acts of ministry be encouraged;
- b. engage in education and prevention of all forms of sexual abuse and harassment;
- c. provide pastoral care for survivors and referrals for treatment of offenders;

- d. create policies and procedures that assist and support the members of the congregation and its leadership to cope in healing and redemptive ways with these abuses; and
- e. manifest its concern for problems of this kind in its community, e.g., families, schools, and work places; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that each synod shall commit itself to:

- a. examine the issues of sexual harassment and abuse as manifested in its synod, in cooperation with appropriate ELCA churchwide units, and with local or regional specialists in its area;
- b. create policies and procedures that empower victims to report incidents of sexual harassment and abuse, provide healing for victims, and safeguard the rights of those accused;
- c. assist congregations in creating their policies and procedures, and urge congregations to inform personnel of these policies and procedures; and
- d. sponsor and encourage theological reflection and insight on these issues; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that this assembly call upon the Commission for Church in Society to include sexual harassment and abuse in its forthcoming Social Statement on Sexuality.