

# DISCERNMENT ON U.S. FOREIGN AND MILITARY POLICY

Social Policy Resolution  
CA16.06.32



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

## **Resolved:**

To receive with gratitude the memorial of the Minneapolis Area Synod regarding its call for the ELCA to study, reflect, search and act in light of ongoing and widening war efforts;

To recognize with gratitude the efforts of the current and previous presiding bishops, the Church Council, synod bishops, clergy and the laity to engage as responsible citizens living out the baptismal calling;

To issue a call for congregations to engage in prayer, Scripture-study and communal reading of the teaching resources of this church, particularly "Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective," "For Peace in God's World" and "Talking Together as Christians about Tough Social Issues";

To invite this church to a particular time of prayer and communal discernment over the next three years to promote robust examination of the consequences of expanded U.S. war efforts since 1990;

To refer to the Church Council to formulate the next steps, including any budgetary implications;

To encourage the Office of the Presiding Bishop to consider dialogue with Called Forward Together in Christ, Declaration on the Way and other ecumenical partners in planning this initiative, including inviting scholars whose work focuses in these areas, activists, seminaries, colleges/universities, synods, VA [Veterans Affairs] and other federal chaplains. We especially hope to include those whose lives are most impacted by these developments in the United States and world.

Topics of inquiry could include:

The impact on well-being of all military personnel and veterans: active, reserve, retired, and national guard, contractors, affiliates, and their families:

- Chronic disabilities and loss (including chemical dependencies and brain injury),
- Collateral involvement with criminal justice system,
- Diminished lives and early deaths of veterans and their families from toxins, PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder] symptoms, and violence,
- Moral injury,
- Character and skill development, and

Broader societal impacts, such as:

- Climate change and global pollution load,
  - Changes in policing practices,
  - Engagement with and prejudice against neighbor Muslims,
  - Policy decisions due to commercial motivations for the proliferation of arms,
  - Social needs met and unmet due to prioritizing public spending on expanding war efforts;
- with Church Council to recommend next steps by April 2017; and

To direct the presiding bishop to communicate this church's time of prayer and discernment to the U.S. President and members of Congress and to encourage ELCA members in this election season of 2016 to communicate the same to candidates for federal office.

**Adopted by the Churchwide Assembly in August 2016**