

**RESOLUTION #2 – Stewardship**

- WHEREAS, through our baptism, all Christians are called to be good stewards, that is, people “who manage the resources God has given, in the world and in the church,” (Donald M. McKim, *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*, Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996, 270); and
- WHEREAS, Jesus Christ, himself, the preeminent steward, instructed his disciples of every time and place that, “From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded,” (Luke 12:48b, NRSV); and
- WHEREAS, the Constitution of the Eastern North Dakota Synod (S6.03.e.5) and the model Constitution for congregations in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (C4.03.9) both include in their Statements of Purpose that they shall encourage financial support for the work of our church by individuals and congregations; and
- WHEREAS, when it comes to good financial stewardship, we often seek to educate and encourage all the baptized to work towards giving 10% of their income to their congregation (using the biblical model of the tithe as the goal for our giving in response to all that God has given us); and
- WHEREAS, we teach that we offer our gifts to God, because all that we have, ourselves, our time and our possessions were first God’s gifts to us; and
- WHEREAS, God’s call to faithful giving, (“*tithing*”), is not a call to burden or despair but is God’s call to spiritual discipline in regards to material possessions. Luther described the state of sinners, (that is *all of us*), as *incurvatus in se*, “curved-in-on-self.” This sinful focus on self fuels our sins of greed, idolatry, and consumeristic materialism. Furthermore, just as this sinful condition affects the individual, it also affects us corporately as a “turned-in-on-self” congregation. God’s call to the spiritual discipline of tithing is designed not only to help the end recipient of our gift but as a “lifting up” of our focus away from our *selves* both as individuals and congregations to the world around us; and
- WHEREAS, the ministries undertaken by the Synod on behalf of our many congregations and members further the mission of the Gospel, while often requiring funding; be it therefore
- RESOLVED, that this Synod thank God for those congregations whose synodical benevolence is currently greater than 10% of their income and continue to encourage these congregations to model generous stewardship of their financial resources, while at the same time striving to continue growing in their giving as they are able; and be it further
- RESOLVED, that this Synod in Assembly invite the congregations of the Eastern North Dakota Synod to consider establishing as a goal the support of programs and

ministries of the Eastern North Dakota Synod by giving at least 10% of congregational income to the synod by means of the synodical benevolence (“mission support”), characterized by congregational Statements of Intent (SOI); and be it further

RESOLVED, that this Synod in Assembly encourage those congregations whose synodical benevolence is currently below that 10% goal to endeavor to increase their efforts within their congregation to educate and encourage a generous growth in their giving in hopes of achieving and exceeding this 10% goal.

Submitted by Pastor John Bradford, First Lutheran Church, Fargo, ND and Pastor Rafe Allison, Peace Lutheran Church, Devils Lake, ND.

**SA.09.05.08** Rafe Alison moved Resolution #2, second by Bob Scheurer. **MOTION CARRIED AS AMENDED**

**SA.09.05.09** Motion to amend by Mike Koesterman, second by Doug Norquist, to strike words in the 2<sup>nd</sup> resolve as follows: “This support would be in addition to the financial support that many congregations are already providing both to synodical and Churchwide ministries, as well as to other local and global ministries;” **MOTION CARRIED** For – 191; Against – 146

**SA.09.05.10** Motion to amend by Kristen Larson-Schmidt, second by Troy Troftgruben, to replace the work “synodical” in line one of the first resolve to “missional” and to strike words in line two of resolve 2 “support of programs and ministries of the EaND Synod by” add after income to in line 4 “ministries outside their congregations, including” and strike all of resolve 3. **MOTION FAILED**