

1 *Resolved*, That the President of the Synod convene a task force including lay leaders, representatives from
 2 districts both with and without licensed lay deacons, and representatives from the Council of Presidents, both
 3 seminaries, and the Commission on Theology and Church Relations to consider how best to facilitate an ongoing
 4 conversation and communication among laity, districts, and the Synod in order to foster the blessed complementary
 5 relationship between the royal priesthood and the Office of the Public Ministry, and also to consider

- 6 (1) the royal priesthood and the office of the public ministry in the New Testament (in light of the many offices
 7 that are mentioned, e.g., deacon, elder, overseer);
- 8 (2) the challenges of an increasingly multicultural America and a country that has become the third largest
 9 mission field in the world; and
- 10 (3) the growing number of congregations and ministries that cannot provide financial support for a pastor.

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 12 *[The estimated cost to implement this proposed resolution appears in the Report*
 13 *of the Finance Floor Committee – found in Sunday’s issue of Today’s Business.]*
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18 **To Regularize Status of Licensed Lay Deacons**
 19 **Involved in Word and Sacrament Ministry**

20
 21 **RESOLUTION 13-02A**
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25 Overtures 13-01–47, 49–50 (CW, pp. 437–464)
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27 WHEREAS, The Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions teach that our Lord gave the keys of the kingdom to
 28 His whole church, the royal priesthood of believers (Matt. 16:15–19; Matt. 18:18–20; 1 Peter 2:9; Augsburg
 29 Confession [AC] Article XXVIII, paragraph 10; Smalcald Articles [SA], Section III, paragraph 7; Treatise [Tr]
 30 paragraph 11; see also Walther’s *Church and Ministry/Office*); and
 31

32 WHEREAS, The Scriptures and Confessions also teach that Christ established an office that is distinct from the
 33 priesthood of believers (the office of the public ministry) for teaching and nurturing His royal priests by means of
 34 preaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments (1 Cor. 12:29; Rom. 10:15; James 3:1; AC XIV; see also
 35 Walther’s *Church and Ministry/Office*); and
 36

37 WHEREAS, The royal priesthood and the office of the public ministry are to have a complementary and not a
 38 competitive or conflicted relationship; and
 39

40 WHEREAS, In its history the Lutheran church has always maintained the divine requirement (*de jure divino*) of
 41 the office of public ministry, while it has in many and various ways prepared men for the Office of the Public
 42 Ministry, since the manner of preparation for the office is by human arrangement (*de jure humano*); and
 43

44 WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church has always ensured, on the basis of Scripture: (1) that men who are to serve in
 45 the office of public ministry be examined as to their doctrine and life; (2) that the congregations they serve willingly
 46 call them into service; and (3) that the wider church (other churches in fellowship with the congregation) also
 47 affirms them as fellow ministers of the Word and Sacraments (see Acts 1:15–26; Acts 14:23; 1 Tim. 3:1–7; Titus 1
 48 5; see also Tr 24, 26, 67–70); and
 49

50 WHEREAS, The rite of ordination, although not a divine institution (*Church and Ministry*, Ministry Thesis VI), is
 51 the apostolic custom by which Lutherans have designated and publicly acknowledged a man as a minister of Word
 52 and Sacrament, that is, as one who is in the Office of the Public Ministry and recognized by the wider fellowship as
 53 a fellow minister (Ap XIII 11–13); and
 54

55 WHEREAS, In faithfulness to the Word of God and to its confession requiring a regular call for those who preach

1 and administer the sacraments publicly in the church (AC XIV; Ap XIV), The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
2 has followed the practice of identifying those who are eligible to be called into the Office of the Public Ministry by
3 the certification of one of the seminary faculties or the Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry; and
4

5 WHEREAS, In a human institution such as the LCMS, such human arrangements are necessary in order to foster
6 harmony and prevent needless confusion and division; and
7

8 WHEREAS, The LCMS has long-recognized that challenging circumstances may make it difficult or impossible
9 to provide a pastor for congregations and ministries, for example: (1) financial challenges (numerous congregations
10 and missions are unable to support a pastor financially); (2) geographical challenges (small, isolated congregations
11 in remote areas often face financial challenges and may have no pastors in geographic proximity to them); (3)
12 demographic challenges (urban, minority, non-English-speaking, and ethnically diverse congregations and missions
13 may find no rostered candidates available to fill their pastoral needs); and
14

15 WHEREAS, The practice of licensing lay deacons for temporary service in certain difficult circumstances, like
16 the afore-mentioned examples, was approved by the LCMS in 1989 Res. 3-05B as a means to address the need for
17 regular preaching of the Word and administration of the Sacraments by utilizing trained and supervised laymen to
18 serve “temporarily” in Word and Sacrament ministry when “no pastor [is] available,” “in exceptional circumstances
19 or in emergencies” (1989 Res. 3-05B, Nomenclature, Guidelines 1 b); and
20

21 WHEREAS, There has been significant dissension in the LCMS over the Synod-approved practice of licensing
22 laymen to preach and administer the Sacraments while under the supervision of an ordained pastor, but the Synod
23 needs to move forward together with deep concern for fidelity to the word of Christ as we confess it together and for
24 faithfulness in the mission that Christ has given to His Church; and
25

26 WHEREAS, 1989 Res. 3-05B repeatedly references temporary service for deacons when no pastor is available in
27 emergencies and exceptional circumstances, but in some cases deacons have served for years regularly preaching
28 and administering the Sacraments; and
29

30 WHEREAS, The presence of continuing dissension about licensed lay deacons is an aspect of further
31 disagreement about elements of doctrine and practice, e.g., the understanding of the pastoral office, the relationship
32 between the Office of the Public Ministry and the royal priesthood, the understanding of call and ordination, and
33 faithful and effective ways to share the Gospel and plant churches in our post-Christian world; and
34

35 WHEREAS, The Specific Ministry Pastors (SMP) Program was established by the LCMS convention (2007 Res.
36 5-01B) in response to the need for effective theological education and practical training to prepare pastors to serve in
37 particularly challenging settings and situations that prevent them from enrolling in residential theological education;
38 and
39

40 WHEREAS, The Synod recognizes a need for flexibility in its approach to preparing men to serve in the Office of
41 the Public Ministry while upholding the biblical requirement that they be men who are “above reproach” and “able
42 to teach,” and so offers approved training programs to prepare pastors for urban and cross-cultural service, namely,
43 the Center for Hispanic Studies, the Cross-Cultural Ministry Center, the Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology
44 (EIIT), all at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and the Spanish-speaking SMP track at Concordia Theological
45 Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW); and
46

47 WHEREAS, There is a need within the LCMS to regularize the status of licensed lay deacons who are engaged in
48 Word and Sacrament ministry; and
49

50 WHEREAS, The Synod directed the President to appoint a task force to address questions 2 about the practice of
51 licensing lay deacons, and the task force, as required, reported a recommended plan to address questions (see
52 *Convention Workbook*, pp.234–255) and the theological framework of the report has been affirmed by both
53 seminary faculties and the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR); and
54

55 WHEREAS, The Synod has budgeted \$40,000 for the remainder of the current fiscal year and is committed to
56 budgeting at least \$150,000 per year for the next two years to assist deacons entering the SMP and EIIT programs;

1 therefore be it

2
3 *Resolved*, That the LCMS recognize that “emergency knows no rule” and that no Synod action can or should
4 prevent a congregation from taking reasonable and scripturally faithful steps necessary to provide for the Word to be
5 proclaimed in time of emergency, while at the same time, every congregation of the Synod is required to address
6 matters involving the Office of the Public Ministry in a way that is consistent with its subscription to Scripture and
7 the Confessions, as well as its agreement to abide by the Synod’s Constitution; and be it further

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9 *Resolved*, That the LCMS affirm and give thanks for the men who have recognized the needs of the church and
10 its mission, serving as licensed lay deacons, preaching and administering the Sacraments in keeping with 1989 Res.
11 3-05B, often without remuneration and at personal cost, lest congregations be deprived of the means of grace; and
12 be it further

13
14 *Resolved*, That the LCMS, while mindful of the need for continued conversation within the church, affirm the
15 theological framework of the “2013 Resolution 4-06A Task Force Report,” namely, that a right calling to the office
16 of public ministry requires that a man be properly prepared and examined regarding doctrine and life, be called by
17 the congregation (or ministry) where he is to serve, and publicly appointed in a way so that the entire church
18 fellowship recognizes the validity of his service (Acts 13:1–3; 14:21–23; 2 Tim. 2:24–26; Titus 1:5); and be it
19 further

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21 *Resolved*, That the Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry establish and implement an expanded regional
22 colloquy program (with appropriate regional colloquy committees) to regularize the status of current licensed lay
23 deacons (LLDs) who are 50 years of age or older and who have been preaching the Gospel and/or administering the
24 Sacraments publicly on behalf of the church for the past 2 years (*de facto* pastors), so that these servants of Christ
25 can be called and ordained according to the order of the LCMS and be rostered as pastors with SMP status; and be it
26 further

27
28 *Resolved*, That exceptions to the SMP colloquy requirements with respect to age and years of service for LLDs
29 may be granted by the appropriate regional colloquy committee with the approval of the respective district president
30 and the plenary of the Council of Presidents; and be it further

31
32 *Resolved*, That nothing in this resolution shall be construed as impeding the training, recognition, credentialing
33 or service of deacons who do not publicly preach or administer the sacraments, namely, those who serve in
34 ministries of mercy, education, or visitation, and so forth, or in an outreach role, assisting in evangelism and church
35 planting (but not in public preaching and administration of the sacraments); and be it further

36
37 *Resolved*, That district presidents may continue to recruit, train, and credential new deacons for general varieties
38 of service in the church that do not include public preaching and administration of the sacraments; and be it further

39
40 *Resolved*, That until January 1, 2018, district presidents may train and annually license lay deacons to preach
41 publicly and to administer the Sacraments. Beyond that date in exceptional cases, as defined in (1) and (2) below,
42 the appropriate district president may annually grant licensure with the consent of the plenary of the Council of
43 Presidents and the Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry.

- 44
45 (1) the deacon serves under the direct supervision of an ordained pastor and is currently enrolled in or
46 preparing for one of the LCMS training tracks for the office of public ministry and participates in the
47 public ministry as an aspect of his training, e.g., in preparation for SMP, EIIT, etc.); or
48
49 (2) the deacon serves in distinctive aspects of the office of public ministry (that is, preaching or
50 administration of the sacraments) only during times of emergency or extraordinary need (when there is
51 no ordained pastor available or able to serve), only on a temporary or occasional basis, and under the
52 direct supervision of an ordained pastor; and be it further

53
54 *Resolved*, That those deacons currently licensed for and serving in Word and Sacrament Ministry (that is,
55 publicly preaching and administering the sacraments) shall have until July 1, 2018, to:

- 56 (1) apply to one of our seminaries for admission into an alternate route program,

- 1 (2) apply for entrance into an SMP program, or
2 (3) apply to the regional colloquy committee for admission to the SMP roster, unless granted a waiver by
3 his district president, the plenary of the Council of Presidents, and the appropriate regional colloquy
4 committee, and be it further
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6 *Resolved*, That the district president, the plenary of the Council of Presidents and the regional colloquy
7 committees, in making decisions related to the three resolves above, shall do so in a fashion that no congregation or
8 current ministry will be forced to close or discontinue; and be it further
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10 *Resolved*, That lay deacons licensed for Word and Sacrament Ministry who have applied for colloquy to the
11 SMP roster prior to July 1, 2018, shall continue to serve under their current district licensure until the colloquy
12 process is complete and certification is given by the Colloquy Committee; and be it further
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14 *Resolved*, That upon the certification of the Colloquy Committee, the licensed lay deacons will be eligible to be
15 called by the congregations where they have been serving, ordained into the Office of the Public Ministry, and
16 placed on the roster of SMP pastors; and be it further
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18 *Resolved*, That as recommended by the Res. 4-06A Task Force, the LCMS, in partnership with districts,
19 congregations, and individuals, provide funding to ensure that financial constraints will not prevent any eligible
20 licensed lay deacon from participating in an LCMS seminary ordination-track program; and be it further
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22 *Resolved*, That the First Vice-President of the Synod and three members of the Council of Presidents appointed
23 by the Council be directed to draft by June 1, 2017, necessary policies and procedures for the implementation of this
24 resolution, such policies and procedures to be finalized and approved by the Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral
25 Ministry; and be it finally
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27 *Resolved*, That the LCMS thank and commend the Res. 4-06A Task Force for its work on the question of
28 licensed lay deacons.
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30 *[The estimated cost to implement this proposed resolution appears in the Report*
31 *of the Finance Floor Committee – found in Sunday’s issue of Today’s Business.]*
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36 **To Clarify Colloquy Requirements**

37 **RESOLUTION 13-04A**

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40 Report R64 (CW, pp. 268–289)

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42 WHEREAS, The 2013 Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) adopted Resolution 5-
43 14A, which reads, simply:
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45 WHEREAS, The Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) Task Force Report notes that there are eight routes to ordained
46 ministry; and
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48 WHEREAS, The SMP Task Force Report recommends for the sake of clarity and simplicity that a study of the
49 non-Master of Divinity routes to the Pastoral Office take place; therefore be it
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51 *Resolved*, That the Synod President appoint a task force (chaired by the Executive Director for Pastoral
52 Education) to conduct a study of the non-Master of Divinity routes to the Pastoral Office, and that it report its
53 findings and the recommendations regarding the appropriateness of each route, the optimal number of such routes,
54 etc., to the Synod President by the end of 2015 for action at the 2016 Synod convention. and be it further
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