

RESOLUTION 2016-02

Resolution Urging Action Regarding the Thrivent Choice Neutrality Policy

Rationale:

Many congregations within the Southeast Michigan Synod have had cooperative and engaging participatory relationships with Thrivent. Thrivent has been generous in its support of non-profit community organizations and compassionate projects within the Southeast Michigan Synod. This joint partnership has furthered many congregations' outreach of benevolence and compassion in serving and loving the neighbor, especially those who are disadvantaged and marginalized.

The new Thrivent Choice Neutrality policy states: *Under this policy, certain organizations are not eligible to receive outreach support or funding. This includes, but is not limited to, organizations with a primary purpose of providing services for or advocating positions either supporting or opposing certain social, politically partisan, or health and human services causes and issues, such as abortion, sexual orientation, or guns; and ...* (See: <https://service.Thrivent.com/forms/Thriventchoice/response.html>) This Neutrality Policy is not supportive of our ELCA mission and values of support, advocacy, corporate social responsibility, and justice for “the least of these...”; and (See: <http://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Publicly-Engaged-Church/Corporate-Social-Responsibility>)

The Southeast Michigan Synod and the ELCA have been attentive and engaged in addressing the complexity and importance of such issues in Messages and Social Statements which encourage inclusion, critical deliberation, compassion, justice and support for our neighbor (See: <http://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society>), which Thrivent formerly supported through Thrivent choice.

Resolved, that the Southeast Michigan Synod meeting in Assembly request Bishop Kreiss to contact Thrivent on our behalf and urge Thrivent to amend its “neutrality policy” to allow for individual freedom and choice in supporting charitable giving without restriction, i.e. return to the previous policy; and,

Resolved, that this Assembly asks the Bishop and our Synod Council to communicate with the ELCA Church Council and Presiding Bishop, expressing the disappointment of this Synod over Thrivent's new Policy and requesting that the ELCA Church Council and Presiding Bishop advocate to have the policy rescinded.

Submitted by:

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The Resolutions Committee recommends the adoption of this resolution.