Rationale: Martin Luther described parenthood as “a special position of honor, higher than that of any other walk of life under it.” (“The Large Catechism,” The Book of Concord, Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, Eds., Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 200. 400.105.) This Church teaches that, “‘Because parenthood is a vocation that women and men share, this church supports public and private initiatives to provide adequate maternity and paternity leaves, greater flexibility in the workplace, and efforts to correct the disparity between the incomes of men and women,” (ELCA Social Statement on Abortion p. 8). Further, the ELCA Draft Social Statement on Women and Justice (2017) states that we: “Seek, support, and advocate for resources for families and communities that empower parents, whether single or coupled, to nurture, protect, and provide for their household in ways that do not reinforce gender-based stereotypes. In particular, advocate for men to participate in all family roles associated with the home, caregiving, parenting, and nurturing,” (p. 47) However, this synod’s Minimum Compensation Guidelines provide only half as much time for paternity leave (4 weeks) as it does maternity leave (8 weeks.) (p13) Evening the amount of recommended leave for parents regardless of gender identity would reflect both this Church’s commitment to moving beyond gender-based stereotypes and support the strength and wellness of families in our synod.

Resolved, that this Assembly encourages the Bishop to ensure that in the 2020 Minimum Compensation Guidelines under “VI. Other Provisions” that the current section “Family/Parental Leave” be replaced with the following:
“C. Family/Parental Leave up to eight (8) weeks per birth or adoption of a child with full salary, housing and benefits for rostered leaders, lay professionals and support staff regardless of gender identity is recommended;” and,

Resolved, that the Bishop, Synod Staff and Conference Deans
1. encourage congregations and their leadership to include this section as part of compensation packages of all congregational employees; and,
2. encourage congregations to include this section in all Letters of Call as part of the compensation package of the called leader; and,
Resolved, that this Assembly encourages the Bishop with the assistance of Synod Staff and the Synod Compensation Task Force to develop a resource packet to be distributed to congregations that includes, but is not limited to, pulpit supply lists, Synod contact person to assist in finding people to provide the necessary emergency and/or short term interim coverage during leave, compensation guidelines for these people, and other helpful practices in order to make the providing of parental leave manageable and affordable.

Submitted by
Rev. David Hively (Christ, Monroe)
Rev. Scott Sessler (Emmanuel, Livonia)
Rev. Mark Fisher (Transfiguration, Fenton)
Rev. Robyn Kistemaker (St. Luke’s, Temperance)
Rev. Jennifer Kiefer (St. John, Dundee)

The committee makes no recommendation on this Resolution.