

Resolution # 4—Resolution for 2009 Synod Assembly Lutheran Disaster Response

Whereas, the Church in Society Program Unit of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) encourages us to be “a public church that witnesses boldly to God’s love for all that God has created,”

Whereas, the ELCA over the last decade, has developed a nationally recognized and effective tool for bringing comfort, healing and renewal to those affected by disasters known as Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR),

Whereas, thousands of ELCA members have been empowered to do God’s work through their hands by being inspired, trained, and deployed by LDR and its affiliates to provide life transforming ministry to those affected by disaster and offering on-going assistance to those in need well after others have left the affected area,

Whereas, disasters can affect anyone – but disproportionately they affect the disenfranchised due to the historic location of poorer communities in vulnerable areas, mobility restrictions, and the lack of access to other resources,

Whereas, disaster preparedness and response offer opportunities for members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church to manifest faith in action by growing spiritually and in striving for justice,

Whereas, disaster preparedness and response offers opportunity for the Church to bear witness to the love of Christ through diverse efforts but coordinated response,

Whereas, the scientific community is raising the alarm that natural disasters will be increasing due to climate change and as a nation since September 11, 2001 we have become more acutely aware of the potential for disaster created by acts of terror,

Whereas, the deficits in our nation’s response to Hurricane Katrina visibly demonstrated our need to be better prepared and that research has demonstrated that preparedness is a primary predictor of survival and recovery in disaster,

Whereas, professionals for local preparedness and response are integral for leadership and coordination of Lutheran congregations, agencies, institutions, volunteers, and resources for best response,

Whereas, the national Lutheran Disaster Response office provides national coordination but the primary preparedness and response happens through the LDR local affiliates, and congregations,

Whereas, LDR lacks the resources to support preparedness plans that would allow the Lutheran Church to be more effective in ministering to people affected by disaster,

Therefore, be it

Resolved that the **Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod** in assembly memorializes the ELCA in assembly to request that the Church in Society Program Unit create an advisory committee charged with crafting a clear vision for LDR to help frame the expectations and requirements of LDR affiliates throughout the

country and that the committee continue to develop guidelines to help affiliates create standard preparedness and response tools.

Be it further resolved that the **Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod** in assembly memorializes the ELCA in assembly to reaffirm its commitment to the mission of disaster preparedness through the Church in Society Program Unit by empowering the advisory committee to work with the staff of LDR to improve its funding streams to assure sustainability of the ministry and the work of LDR and of LDR affiliates.

Be it further resolved that the **Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod** in assembly memorializes the ELCA in assembly to request the Conference of Bishops and the Church in Society Program Unit to collaborate in facilitating national and local conversation with ecumenical partners to create national and local coordinated service relationships in disaster response.

Be it further resolved that Lutheran Disaster Response use the technological tools available to it to develop, support and maintain a national network to connect those affiliates engaged in response with the resources (equipment, supplies, and work teams) throughout the national network.

The Committee on Reference and Counsel recommends approval of the resolution.