

RESOLUTION 11.05

REGARDING PEACEMAKING

WHEREAS, Christian parents, pastors, church youth leaders, Sunday school teachers, and confirmation instructors are called to nurture youth into the mind, life and spirit of Christ, who asks that we love as he loved, who teaches us to love our enemies and return good for evil, who requires mercy, not sacrifice; and

WHEREAS, Jesus emphatically rejected use of violence: "Put your sword back into its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword." (Matt. 26:52) and (to the disciple using a sword), "No more of this!" (Luke 22:51); and

WHEREAS, Jesus, having rejected the way of the sword (the route of redemptive violence), lived and taught the way of the Cross (the route of redemptive love); and

WHEREAS, Fellow humans we fear and hate as enemies are, in Jesus' mandate, to be loved by us (Matt. 5:44), and St. Paul writes that we are to "live peaceably with all" and, "If your enemies are hungry, feed them." (Rom. 12:18, 20); and

WHEREAS, Luther taught that, since Christians "must obey God rather than any human authority" (Acts 5:29), Christians, in order to "have a good conscience before God," should "neither fight nor serve" in a war they believe is against God's will; and

WHEREAS, "*For Peace in God's World*," the ELCA social statement adopted by the Churchwide Assembly in 1995, specifically affirms the right of conscientious objection to any bearing of arms, and the right of selective objection to participation in immoral military activity; and

WHEREAS, Volunteering to be placed in the position of killing or being killed is a personal and moral decision and too often there is insufficient Christian education to assist young people in making such a decision; therefore be it

RESOLVED:

- 1. That** parents, pastors, church youth leaders, Sunday school teachers, and confirmation instructors in congregations of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA be encouraged to:
 - a. continue teaching what Jesus taught and lived regarding non-violence;
 - b. provide information on the resolution of conflict without the use of violence;
 - c. discuss with young people the often destructive consequences of war for all citizens of combatant countries;
 - d. provide prayerful support for those who choose to serve in the military and for those who choose by reason of conscience not to be engaged in military activity; and
- 2. That** the Board for Serving in God's World of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA work with the Joint Peace with Justice Committee of the Minneapolis and St. Paul Area Synods to provide our congregations with resources for addressing the issues of faith and conscience inherent in military service; and
- 3. That** the priority of peacemaking be affirmed as a calling for all.

Submitted by Rev. Charles Christensen, Trinity Lutheran Church, Saint Peter, MN