



Northern Illinois Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



R-3: Resolution to Reject Christian Nationalism

Whereas, the United States is founded upon the principles of freedom of religion and separation of church and state, as enshrined in the First Amendment to the Constitution; and

Whereas, Christian Nationalism is *“a cultural framework that idealizes and advocates fusion of certain Christian views with American civic life. This political ideology, whether explicit or not, includes the beliefs that the U.S. Constitution was divinely inspired and enjoys godly status, that Christianity should be a privileged religion in the U.S., that the nation holds a special status in God’s eyes, and that good Americans must hold Christian beliefs.”* From the draft of the social statement: *Civic Life and Faith.*; and

Whereas, *“Christian nationalism is a political ideology and is neither faithful to Christ nor patriotic. It idealizes and advocates the fusion of certain Christian views with loyalty to one’s country and encourages enforcing upon the nation a particular and harsh understanding of certain Christian principles”* from The ELCA’s “Study Curriculum on Civic Life and Faith”; and

Whereas, history has repeatedly shown the dangers of intertwining religious authority with governmental power, leading to the oppression of minority beliefs and practices; and

Whereas, the promotion of any one religion as fundamentally American alienates and marginalizes individuals and communities of other faiths or no faith; and

Whereas, *“This church (the ELCA) names racism as sin and affirms that the diversity of cultures throughout history is a God-given gift and a glimpse of the future.”* [ELCA Social Statement: Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture.]; and

Whereas, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton has endorsed the Christians Against Christian Nationalism statement that reads, in part: *“Christian nationalism seeks to merge Christian and American identities, distorting both the Christian faith and America’s constitutional democracy. Christian nationalism demands Christianity be privileged by the State and implies that to be a good American, one must be Christian. It often overlaps with and provides cover for white supremacy and racial subjugation.”*; and

Whereas, St. Paul writes: *“...and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator. In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, and barbarian, Scythian, enslaved and free, but Christ is all and in all! (Colossians 3:10b-11)”*;

Therefore, be it resolved, that this Assembly of the Northern Illinois Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America absolutely repudiates Christian Nationalism; and

Be it further resolved that the Northern Illinois Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America commits to upholding the principles of religious freedom and the separation of church and state; and

Be it further resolved that the congregations and people of the Northern Illinois Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are encouraged to use the resources *We Are Christians Against Christian Nationalism*, available from the ELCA Advocacy Network, and curriculum available for the study of the proposed Social Statement: “Civic Life and Faith”; and

Be it further resolved that the Northern Illinois Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will actively work to educate and advocate for a society that values and respects the religious diversity and freedom of all its members.

Written by:

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*Rev. Frank Langholf – Emmanuel – Rockford, IL

Signatures:

*Rev. Quentin Fleming – Calvary - Moline, IL

David Luecht – St. John – Joliet, IL

Judith Wierman – St. John – Joliet, IL

Karen Becker – St. John – Joliet, IL

*Kim Halper – Nativity Lutheran Church – Wonder Lake, IL

*Rev. Robin Caldwell – St. John – Joliet, IL

*Rev. Amanda Dahlseng-Monroe – Grace, Love Park, IL

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* Rev Gregory D. Olson, United Lutheran Church, Gardner, IL

*Rev. Paul Carlson

Sent in on behalf of and also endorsed by the North Conference

**Asterisk indicates Voting Members of the NIS Assembly, June 14-15, 2024*

Submitted: 4/13/2024

Action of the NIS Resolution Committee: **Recommend adoption of the resolution.**