

**A MEMORIAL CONCERNING IMMIGRATION REFORM**

**WHEREAS**, the current legislation prevents undocumented individuals - especially high school aged graduates - from benefiting from any federally funded student financial aid i.e. loans, grants, scholarships, and work-study programs; the ability to further one's education is essentially, stopped, hence, the ability to obtain a job with steady income and benefits is unattainable (See U.S. Supreme Court decisions on Toll vs. Moreno 1982 and on Plyer vs. Doe 1982); and,

**WHEREAS**, the process for naturalization is a long and formidable one, often made more difficult by lack of available funds and a sturdy foundation; and,

**WHEREAS**, more than 56,000 documented immigrants to the United States in 2011 were refugees of political and religious violence, civil war, genocide, human trafficking, famine, and other abundant social, economic, and political ills. (US Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Refugee Resettlement - "Fiscal Year 2011 Refugee Arrivals" - <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/data/fy2011RA.htm>); and,

**WHEREAS**, we, the body of Christ, are called to feed, clothe, and welcome strangers [Matthew 25:35] and told that "they should be treated like everyone else, and [we] must love them as [we] love [ourselves]; remember that you were once foreigners in the land of Egypt." (Leviticus 20:34); and,

**WHEREAS**, Jesus tells us to we take up our cross and not stand idly by but rather to open our arms, and help to carry the crosses of our brothers and sister, we are called to create a foundation, not of sand, but of rock upon which we can further build the house of God. Therefore be it

**RESOLVED**, that the Southeastern Synod of the ELCA memorialize the ELCA Churchwide Assembly to direct the ELCA Advocacy Ministry to work with the United States Congress in order to encourage immigration reform and the adoption of the DREAM Act; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that the Southeastern Synod Lutheran Youth Organization and the Southeastern Synod Assembly encourage the rostered leaders, congregations, and youth of the Southeastern Synod to be actively involved in conversations with their congregations and communities and to advocate for the rights and freedoms of all people no matter their race, gender, age, or citizenship status.

Reference and Counsel recommends adoption.