

Point of information

The following resolution was submitted for consideration at the 2025 Southeast Michigan Synod Assembly. Upon reviewing resolution and governing documents of the Southeast Michigan Synod, it was discovered that the current form of the Synod Constitution and other governing documents already make room for full inclusion of all people in positions of leadership, regardless of gender identity. Synod staff did revise the nomination form regarding the Discipline and Consultation committees to remove gender specifications, as they are not required. No other action can be taken. We present the resolution, however, as a point of information to the assembly.

We, the leadership of the Southeast Michigan Synod, are grateful to Pastor Newman for taking the time to craft this resolution. We continue to celebrate over 33 years of partnership with Reconciling Works and our status as Reconciling in Christ synod. We also celebrate that our constitution and other governing documents make room for all voices at the leadership table and we commit to continuing our efforts to provide educational resources regarding the importance of full gender inclusion.

Resolution to Expand Gender Categories in Synodical Representation

Southeast Michigan Synod, ELCA

Whereas we believe that all people are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27) and are made holy in God's love, regardless of gender identity;

Whereas Jesus consistently modeled radical inclusion, welcoming and affirming those who were marginalized by societal norms;

Whereas the current practice of electing representatives based solely on binary gender categories (male/female) does not reflect the full diversity of God's creation and excludes non-binary, gender-expansive, and other individuals who do not identify within that framework;

Whereas the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is committed to justice, equity, and full participation of all people in the life of the Church (Galatians 3:28);

Whereas the Southeast Michigan Synod seeks to be a leader in fostering inclusion and ensuring that all members have a voice in synodical decision-making;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Southeast Michigan Synod of the ELCA will **immediately adopt** an expanded model for representation, in which gender categories include:

- Male
- Female
- Non-Binary/Unspecified/Other

Be it further resolved that the Southeast Michigan Synod will revise all governing documents, policies, and election procedures to reflect this commitment to gender inclusivity;

Be it further resolved that the Southeast Michigan Synod will submit this resolution to the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, calling upon the wider Church to follow this example in ensuring that all God's people—regardless of gender identity—are welcomed fully into leadership and participation;

Be it finally resolved that the Southeast Michigan Synod will provide education and resources to congregations and synodical leaders on the importance of gender inclusion, ensuring that this work reflects our shared commitment to justice, equity, and the radical love of Christ.

Submitted by:

Rev. Steph "Ash" Newman (they/them)
Christ Lutheran Church, Waterford, Michigan