RESOLUTION #3—Social Statement on Human Disability

WHEREAS, an estimated 54 million children and adults within the United States live with a disability; and

WHEREAS, people who live with a disability have historically faced challenges in gaining equal access to education, employment, health care and accessibility and are more likely to live in poverty than people without disabilities; and

WHEREAS, because of ignorance, fear, and the perpetuation of myths, people with disabilities and their families have been stigmatized and discriminated against in church and society; and

WHEREAS, persons who live with a disability are active members and leaders in congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, yet many congregations struggle with issues of accessibility, accommodation and welcome; and

WHEREAS, in carrying out its mission to the world, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America commits itself to, "study social issues and trends, work to discover the causes of oppression and injustice, and develop programs of ministry and advocacy to further human dignity, freedom, justice, and peace in the world" (ELCA 4.03.l); and

WHEREAS, neither the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America nor its predecessor bodies has a social statement addressing the theological and social implications of human disability; and

WHEREAS, the *Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns* states that topics for social statements shall be approved by the Churchwide Assembly and development of a social statement shall be overseen by the Church in Society unit;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA memorialize the 2009 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to direct the Church and Society program unit to develop a social statement concerning persons with disabilities to be presented for consideration by the 2013 Churchwide Assembly; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOVLED, that the task force charged with the formation of this social statement pay special attention to the unique issues that face different types of disabilities, whether they be physical, sensory, psychiatric or intellectual.

Submitted by: Chaplain Stephen Weisser, M.Div., A.C.
Paul's Run Community