

**Vote Margin on Changes in this Church's Policy and Practice
South Dakota Synod (3C)**

WHEREAS, a two-thirds majority vote of the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has been the usual requirement for major decisions, including the adoption of ELCA social statements and amendments to the ELCA constitution and bylaws; and

WHEREAS, the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee of the Church Council recommended that "any motion to come before this Churchwide Assembly regarding changes in this church's policy and practice for the rostering of ordained ministers, diaconal ministers, associates in ministry, and deaconesses shall require a two-thirds vote by the assembly for adoption"; and

WHEREAS, the upcoming 2009 Churchwide Assembly vote on the recommendations of the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality, as embodied in its reports "Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust" and "Report and Recommendation on Ministry Policies," potentially would necessitate "changes in this church's current policy and practice for the rostering of ordained ministers, diaconal ministers, associates in ministry, and deaconesses"; and

WHEREAS, the process by which this church arrives at its major decisions affect directly the legitimacy and acceptability of such decisions both within this church and across the wider body of believers; and

WHEREAS, the 2009 Churchwide Assembly vote on the recommendations of the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality has the potential to foment division within this church in its various expressions; and

WHEREAS, the continued unity and well-being of this church, and the mutual trust and respect of all of its members and expressions, is the rightful concern of all who are associated with the ELCA; and

WHEREAS, a two-thirds majority vote clearly illustrates that a given outcome is most definitively the will of the assembly as the primary legislative body of this church; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the South Dakota Synod Council ask the Church Council to add the following provision to the rules of procedure for the 2009 Churchwide Assembly: "Any motion to come before this Churchwide Assembly regarding changes in this church's policy and practice for the rostering of ordained ministers, diaconal ministers, associates in ministry, and deaconesses shall require a two-thirds vote by the assembly for adoption."