



Resolution 02-02A-18

SUBJECT: To Request Synod to Move Ordination Upon Completion of SMP Four-Year Program

(Reference Overture 02-01-18 printed on pages 152-153 of the Convention Workbook)

- WHEREAS,** The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, in Convention in 2001 passed Resolution 3-08B, “To Address Needs and Opportunities for Pastoral Ministry in Specialized Situations,” and
- WHEREAS,** Resolution 3-08B provided for Licensed Lay Deacons to continue to be trained under supervision (Resolution 3-05B, Wichita Convention, 1989); and
- WHEREAS,** Synodical Resolution 13-02A, (2016) “Regularized Licensed Lay Deacon” ministries toward ordination consistent with *The Book of Concord* (Augsburg Confession, XIV and Apology, XIV); and
- WHEREAS,** Scripture exhorts the Church in 1 Timothy 5:22 “do not be hasty in the laying on of hands...”; and
- WHEREAS,** R 13-02A provides several options toward ordination of existing Licensed Lay Deacons, including Regional SMP Colloquy, General Colloquy, SMP Seminary track, Alternate Route seminary training, and general ministry seminary track; and
- WHEREAS,** The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in Convention in 2007, passed Resolution 5-01B “To Establish Specific Ministry Pastor Program;” and
- WHEREAS,** Resolution 5-01B, 2007 provided for SMP candidates to receive “preordination curriculum, and post-ordination curriculum,” covering two two-year segments of the seminary education; and
- WHEREAS,** Steps 3 and 4, approved by Resolution, provided that a certification, Call, and Ordination be allowed after successful completion of two years of preordination studies; and
- WHEREAS,** Step 5, approved by Resolution, provided that the post-ordination curriculum include “OT content and theology, NT content and theology, gifts of Christ, body of Christ, Church history and the history of Lutheranism, Christian education, pastoral theology, and theology of missions... residential seminars [including] pastoral formation, issues in pastoral ministry, team ministry, urban ministry, and spiritual formation... field seminars [including] basic mission planting, edge gathering, and advanced mission planter training.” [2007 Synod Proceedings, page 134]; and

- WHEREAS,** Step 4 also included the caveat that “Refusal [or inability] to complete the Specific Ministry Pastor Program would result in the pastor’s removal from the Synod roster, at which point he is not eligible for a call;” and
- WHEREAS,** The provision of ordination after two years, with the proviso that the rostered worker complete two more years of formal, required education, has led to men being removed from the LCMS roster, and created confusion about the Office of Holy Ministry; therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That currently enrolled SMP students (preordination and post-ordination) continue in the SMP track of two years toward ordination and two years of required post-ordination requirements; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the Mid-South District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod memorialize the LCMS 2019 Convention to modify the provisions of the SMP program as outlined in 2007 Resolution 5-01B to require students enrolling in the SMP programs after the 2020 academic year to finish all academic requirements of the SMP program before ordination and placement on the minister of religion—ordained roster of the Synod; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the Council of Presidents and the Pastoral Formation Committee would consider requiring students enrolled in the SMP programs to finish all academic requirements of the SMP program before ordination and placement on the minister of religion—ordained roster of the Synod; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the Council of Presidents and the Pastoral Formation Committee would report on these recommended improvements and submit any corresponding proposed bylaw amendments to the 2022 Convention of the Synod for consideration; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That students who have completed the first academic year be designated as vicars, and may conduct services under supervision of their local pastor, and approval of the respective seminary program director and District President; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That SMP vicars will remain in that role as long as they are enrolled and actively pursuing SMP Ordination; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That if a student for any reason is no longer enrolled in the SMP program the vicar designation is removed until or unless he again becomes actively enrolled in the SMP program; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That any delays or postponements of a student’s progress must be approved by the respective seminary program director and the District

President. While delayed or postponed the vicar designation will be removed; and be it further

RESOLVED,

That a separate ‘SMP Vicar’ designation be considered for purposes of Synod and District salary guidelines; and be it finally

RESOLVED,

That the SMP vicar may receive compensation under the vicarage agreement with the congregation and seminary program, but without admission to the roster of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Rev. Robert Portier, Chair
Rev. Joshua Willadsen, Secretary