

# SAFE HAVEN FOR CHILDREN

Social Policy Resolution

CA99.03.03



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.

## Adopted by the 1999 Churchwide Assembly.

### Whereas

Whereas, Jesus modeled a concern for children when he said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs" (Mark 10:14, NRSV);

Whereas, more than 14 million children under age 18 and five million under age six in the U.S. live in poverty, a deplorable condition made more severe by reductions in public assistance (U.S. Bureau of Census, unpublished data, March 1998);

Whereas, 4.2 million children experience severe to moderate hunger (U.S. Department of Agriculture);

Whereas, 11.3 million children through age 18 have no health insurance (Children's Defense Fund, 1997 census data);

Whereas, homelessness has increased disproportionately among children (study of the National Coalition for the Homeless);

Whereas, every day more than three children die as a result of abuse or neglect (National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse, 1996 survey); and

Whereas, an average of 14 children die each day from gunfire (Children's Defense Fund); therefore, be it

### Resolved

RESOLVED, that the 1999 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America urge congregations to work toward a Christ-centered, positive environment for children in families, congregations, and communities, and

1. pray for the well-being of all children, but in particular for the poorest and most at risk;
2. declare our congregations as "safe havens" for all children;
3. develop creative programs to meet the needs of children in the congregation and community with special emphasis on those who are hungry, homeless, abused, lonely, and subject to violence;
4. advocate in collaboration with advocacy offices of this church in support of public policy that advances the well-being of children and their families and in opposition to policies that harm them; and

5. work collaboratively with other congregations, Lutheran social ministry organizations, and groups that strive to help children thrive.