

2009 Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly  
Committee on Memorials  
**Recommendation 1**

*pass*

The Committee on Memorials recommends the adoption of the following memorial in response to memorials on this subject received from Conferences One, Two, Three, Four, Five, and Six:

**Resolution Calling for a Super Majority to Change Ministry Policies**

WHEREAS, the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly will consider the *Report and Recommendation on Ministry Policies* from the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality that ask the ELCA to change its teaching and policy to affirm the possibility of committed same-sex relationships for pastors and other rostered leaders in the ELCA; and

WHEREAS, the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee of the ELCA Church Council recommended in November that any motion to come before this Churchwide Assembly regarding changes in this church's current 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 ELCA Church Council voted 19-10 to delete this provision and is recommending rules of procedure for the 2009 Churchwide Assembly which would require only a simple majority vote to change ELCA standards to allow pastors and other rostered leaders to be in same-sex sexual relationships; and

WHEREAS, 17 Synod Councils asked the ELCA Church Council to change its simple majority proposal to a two-thirds majority vote (3 Synod Councils supported the simple majority recommendation); and

WHEREAS, a super majority [two-thirds] of the ELCA Conference of Bishops asked for a super majority vote to reflect the gravity of these four resolutions; and

WHEREAS, a two-thirds majority vote is usually required for major decisions including the adoption of an ELCA social statement and for amendments to the ELCA constitution and bylaws, so that such decisions will be accepted by the entire church as legitimate; and

WHEREAS, a decision to change church teaching and policy to allow pastors and other rostered leaders to be in same-sex sexual relationships holds the potential to be very divisive in many ELCA synods and congregations and to cause both membership and financial losses for synods and congregations; and

WHEREAS, a super majority vote such as a two-thirds majority — would require an overwhelming majority of Churchwide Assembly voting members to make such a significant change to church teaching and practice; and

WHEREAS, the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly will adopt its rules for the assembly and could set a two-thirds majority for adoption of any changes to standards for pastors and other rostered leaders; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly memorize the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to require a two-thirds vote on the four parts of the Ministry Policies Recommendation; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly endorse the following provision as an addition to the rules of procedure for the 2009 Churchwide Assembly: "Any motion to come before this Churchwide Assembly regarding changes in this church's current 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 be it further

RESOLVED, that this synod assembly urge that the voting members from the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod present the above addition to the rules of procedure at the time the 2009 Churchwide Assembly considers the rules of procedure for the assembly.