

1 COMMITTEE NAME: (For District Use Only)
2 OVERTURE NUMBER: (For District Use Only)
3 SUBJECT: Celebration of the 500th Anniversary of Luther's Small
4 Catechism
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7 **WHEREAS**, Luther's Small Catechism was first published in 1529 as a means to instruct laypeople in basic
8 Christian doctrine; and
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10 **WHEREAS**, it became an immediate success in that Lutheran pastors preached from it; city councils in
11 Luther's time adopted it for school textbooks; parents taught from it; and children learned it by heart;
12 and
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14 **WHEREAS**, the practice of using Luther's Small Catechism has been widely neglected across Synod since
15 the 1950s when numerous pastors began (and continue) using other materials instead of the Catechism
16 in adult instruction classes, resulting in countless members who have never seen the Small Catechism,
17 once known as the layperson's Bible, because of its pertinent, irreplaceable Biblical teachings; and
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19 **WHEREAS**, Luther's Small Catechism remains today a book that the head of the family should teach, not
20 just to his children, but to his entire household; and
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22 **WHEREAS**, catechisms of other church denominations have come and gone, but Luther's Small
23 Catechism has endured and is the oldest catechism of the church still in use today;¹ and
24

25 **WHEREAS**, Luther's Small Catechism is not only a book of the chief doctrines of the Bible, but also a
26 book that is a prayer book and can be used in daily devotions; and
27

28 **WHEREAS**, Missouri Synod Lutherans have in the past celebrated Luther's Small Catechism on its 400th
29 anniversary where 60,000 Lutherans gathered in Soldiers' Field in Chicago²; 45,000 with a choir of 1,300
30 singers gathered at the state Fair Grounds Coliseum near Detroit³; 25,000 celebrated in the city's arena
31 with a 3,500 member children's choir in St. Louis, Missouri⁴; and many other celebrations of the
32 catechism were held throughout the United States and Canada⁵ where thousands of Lutherans praised
33 and gave thanks to God for Luther's Small Catechism; and
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35 **WHEREAS**, no noteworthy celebration was held for the 450th Anniversary of the catechism⁶; therefore
36 be it
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38 **Resolved**, that the Michigan District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod reaffirm the spiritually
39 edifying importance of pastors faithfully continuing to use Luther's Small Catechism in catechizing junior
40 confirmands, and be it further
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42 **Resolved**, that the Michigan District strongly urge its pastors to use Luther's Small Catechism to
43 catechize adults desirous of becoming communicant members, and be it further
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45 **Resolved**, that the Michigan District reaffirm the biblical importance of using Luther's Small Catechism
46 by urging pastors to preach on the Catechism's teachings in Sunday services at least several times each
47 year, as Luther and his friend Pastor Bugenhagen faithfully preached, and be it further
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1 **Resolved**, that our Michigan District pastors and churches encourage the daily use of Luther’s Small
2 Catechism by heads of households in their homes for devotions and prayer; and be it further

3
4 **Resolved**, that the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod and the Michigan District of the Lutheran Church
5 Missouri Synod begin planning a major celebration of the 500th anniversary of the writing and publishing
6 of what has been called the Layman’s Bible to be held in the year 2029 to praise and give thanks to God
7 for the catechism, which instructs us in God’s Word; and be it finally

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9 **Resolved**, that the Michigan District in Convention submit to the next LCMS Convention this overture
10 with adjustments made so that it reads “The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod” in place of “The Michigan
11 District” wherever appropriate.

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13 Cost: To be estimated by Synodical and District Treasurers, based upon District Administrative
14 discussions.

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16 Submitted by: St. Paul Lutheran Church, Millington, Michigan

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18 ¹Lueker, Erwin L., “Catechetics,” Lutheran Cyclopedia, p. 175.

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20 ²The Lutheran Witness, June 23, 1929, p. 242.

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22 ³The Lutheran Witness, November 12, 1929, p. 375-376.

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24 ⁴The Lutheran Witness, November 12, 1929, p. 376.

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26 ⁵The Lutheran Witness, May 28, 1929, p.185, September 3, 1929, p. 298, October 30, 1929, p.
27 361-362, November 12, 1929, p. 376, November 26, 1929, p. 393-394, December 24, 1929, p.
28 424-426, and Der Lutheraner, July 16, 1929, p. 250.

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30 ⁶Schmidt, Alvin J., Hallmarks of Lutheran Identity, 2017, p. 143.