

## SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESULTS

The results from the recent survey regarding the ELCA Social Statement "Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust" have been compiled and evaluated. There were 84 responses from just over 200 surveys sent out, and although we hoped to receive a survey from everyone, statistically this provided a very good representation of the congregation as a whole. Recognizing this, the results of the survey are as follows:

Our top priority was determining if the members of the congregation wanted to modify Faith's teachings or its pastoral selection through adoption of the new ELCA resolutions. The choice is possible because even though we are currently governed by the ELCA, the ELCA's resolutions are defined as "teaching guidelines" and not a mandate. Therefore, Faith has the option to decide whether to incorporate the new resolutions or not. The result is that the vast majority (84.4%) of the survey respondents requested that Faith Lutheran exercise the option of not changing its position or teachings to match those of the new ELCA resolutions.

Next, we wanted to get a sense of whether the new resolutions passed by the ELCA were causing our members spiritual or theological conflict. The survey indicated that nearly two-thirds (63.1%) of respondents 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that the newly passed resolutions are causing them spiritual and/or theological conflict.

Another question the survey asked was whether "The stance that Faith Lutheran ultimately takes with the ELCA could have an impact on my decision to continue my membership with Faith Lutheran". The majority (58.5%) 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed'.

In conjunction with the previous question, we asked what direction you would like to see Faith Lutheran Church take now that the ELCA has adopted the new resolutions. The survey showed that 15.7% are in agreement with the resolutions and fully support the ELCA. 38.6% are content to maintain our affiliation with the ELCA as long as Faith Lutheran does not make any changes to reflect the new resolutions. An additional 28.9% also desire to maintain the "status quo", but want Faith Lutheran to evaluate ways of protesting the ELCA's new guidelines and support exploring other Lutheran church bodies (e.g., the NALC). Finally, 16.9% of respondents completely reject the resolutions and express a strong desire to secede from the ELCA.

## COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS

First, the council is exceedingly aware that there is a strong desire to preserve the community of Faith. As a congregation, we view our church as a vital and growing family of wonderfully diverse people that enjoy sharing their faith and practice in Lutheran doctrine with one another. Council's hope and intent when providing the survey and summarizing the results was to gain an understanding about where the congregation stood in regards to the ELCA's newly passed resolutions. One outcome of the survey indicated that 63.1% of the respondents have spiritual or theological conflict with the ELCA's resolution. To this end, Council would like to pursue opportunities to alleviate this to the extent possible and continue to make Faith Lutheran the place of worship of choice for our congregation.

In the short-term, Council will provide provisions for members who have strong conflicting feelings with the new ELCA resolutions by allowing them to designate (e.g., on the 2011 donation envelopes) that no portion of their pledge funds go to the ELCA. Likewise, members who feel strongly about supporting the ELCA can place funds in their envelopes above their pledge to be directed specifically to the ELCA, (please note this on your giving envelope and it will be directed accordingly). A minimum of 94% of our total giving is dedicated to supporting the ongoing costs at Faith Lutheran and our ministries.

The Council also recognizes the strong desire (84.4%) to exercise the option of not changing its position or teachings to match those of the new ELCA resolutions. Thus, Council will not make any changes in our liturgy or pastoral selection process, Sunday school teachings or Pastor's messages to the church in his weekly sermons.

The survey also showed that continuing membership with Faith Lutheran might be influenced by the stance the church takes with the ELCA (58.5%). This is the most troublesome issue for the Council, because we know we will not be able to please everyone on this issue. Council has decided that an informed congregation will make the best decisions and therefore Faith's stance will be to continue to educate the congregation on how the ELCA compares (and differs) from several other Lutheran denomination-governing bodies and offer some insight as to why some

Churches have come to the decision to leave the ELCA while others have not. Providing this information, as well as additional teaching on this subject as requested by the congregation, also aligns with the 82.2% of respondents that answered with a neutral to strong interest in being offered additional informational opportunities pertaining to this topic.

Since there is a Lutheran governing body (NALC) that have only emerged within the past several months specifically to counter the ELCA's resolutions, both the Council and Pastor Weryha want to watch to see how it and others grow and evolve over the next year before even considering a change to our governing body. In the interim, we encourage you to become active in this process by researching and submitting pertinent information to the Council as well. Early in 2012, the Council, with the assistance of a new Task Force and information provided by congregational members, will summarize and disseminate the information gathered over the prior year. At that time, Council will provide the congregation additional information along with a new survey with the intent of determining what the overall direction that our then better informed congregation would like Faith Lutheran to follow, understanding that this may lead to a consideration for changing our governing body.

In summary, Faith Lutheran Church, as a congregation, is no different today than before the ELCA's ruling on this issue and sees no need to change its pastoral selection process, its teachings, or pastoral messages. Faith Lutheran is and will remain a church that believes that the good works and community provided by our church family should outweigh any distraction caused by this issue. Faith Lutheran also recognizes the conflict that the ELCA's decision is having on much of the congregation and will continue to actively research, educate, adapt, and/or transform to the end that we as a church family are able to minimize the conflict. Lastly, understanding that it is important to remain open to new information and accept that life is fluid (even in the church), our prevailing goal should be our focus on worshiping the Lord and making Faith Lutheran a warm and welcoming place for members and visitors alike.