

Resolution #: 5b
Recommendation: No Recommendation
Action Taken:

Subject: A Resolution to Repeal S8.51.10 Concerning Term Limits for the Office of Bishop
Source: Crossroads Conference

WHEREAS the Scriptures teach, “It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-13); and

WHEREAS the constitution review task force raised the issue of term limits for synod officers as one place where the governing documents of the South Dakota Synod differ from the Model Constitution for Synods of the ELCA, and forwarded their findings without recommendation to the Synod Council; and

WHEREAS the Synod Council at consecutive meetings in 2017 discussed term limits for synod officers, the distinct nature of the sense of call for the office of bishop apart from the other elected offices of the synod, and subsequently recommended the repeal of S8.51.10;

WHEREAS the Synod Assembly, acting on behalf of the whole synod, prayerfully seeks to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit in all actions of the synod; and

WHEREAS for the sake of the mission of the church, congregations trust its people to discern the work of the Holy Spirit in calling all servants, including pastors and deacons, into ministry without regard to term; and

WHEREAS the office of bishop is a calling from the Holy Spirit, discerned both by a candidate and the synod meeting in assembly; and

WHEREAS the Constitution of this Synod provides for the appointment of a Synod Study Committee and Bishop Election Committee to provide opportunities for discernment of call for the office of bishop, lift up the needs of the synod, and names of ministers of word and sacrament with gifts for the office of bishop – regardless of whether a bishop is eligible for re-election; therefore be it

RESOLVED that bylaw S8.51.10, which states, “The Bishop may be elected to no more than two consecutive terms and shall serve until a successor assumes office.” be struck from the Constitution of the South Dakota Synod of the ELCA effective on June 15, 2019.