EVENING OF LISTENING AND SHARING RELATED TO ELCA RESOLUTION /SANCTUARY CHURCH

PURPOSE: “To listen to the Holy Spirit as we listen to and share with one another regarding the ELCA resolution about becoming Sanctuary Church body.”

POSSIBLE SCRIPTURE TEXTS: (Avoiding the “gotta’ do this” law- oriented scripture texts used by each perspective in order to persuade and defend existing positions). Essential here is to emphasize the presence, guidance, and love of Christ in our midst. The catechetical question ”What does this mean”? always follows -not precedes-knowledge of the theological statement.

Psalms 23, 46, 121, 130, 139

Isaiah 43:1-4a

Lamentations 3:21-23

Matthew 6:25-34; Matthew 28:30b

John 3:16; John 15:16-17

POSSIBLE PRAYERS: Ideally, the leader would pray with specific contextual integration. However, Prayers for the Spiritual Life of the Congregation, found on pages 86 and 87 of the ELW are very appropriate.

HELPFUL MATERIAL AND GATHERING PLACE

---Copies of the actual ELCA Resolution, Bishop Yoos Statement, and ELCA Talking Point

---White Board

---Paper/pencils for participants (see agenda)

---Avoid a lectern/classroom/ lecture hall set- up if possible. It helps to have folks facing one another as well as the conversation leader moving towards each speaker with microphone (if needed). Informality and relationships are more important here.

WHO LEADS THIS?

The council and pastor determine this, based on their knowledge of the congregation, its history of care for one another in the midst of differing opinions/emotions, and its trust in the council and pastor. It is often helpful if the pastor remains silent during the meeting unless the pastor must really address something that is absolutely necessary. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO HAVE A SCRIBE KEEP NOTES OF QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS THAT ARISE….AND THEN FOR COUNCIL TO DISCOVER AND SHARE THE FAITHFUL AND ACCURATE INFORMATION. The council and pastor decide whether or not such a gathering is needed and then inform the congregation. They decide and communicate what will happen to the results of such a gathering. If no gathering is needed, see last section of this document for possible survey questions to communicate to synod and ELCA.

WHAT CONCERNS AND EMOTIONS MIGHT EMERGE?

------Emotions such as powerless, fear, worry, anger, helpless, betrayal, manipulated by the higher ups, curious, hopeful, suspicious have been expressed.

-----Concerns such as the following have been expressed: Top down decision making in the ELCA; We have no say in anything anymore---are just informed what we have to do and believe; Nobody up there really cares or understands the congregation anymore; big cities rule in politics and in the church now (reference to metro NY Synod presenting the resolution); Sanctuary used to be a holy, theological concept but has been co-opted by American politics. No matter what the ELCA means by the term, folks were not given any opportunity to participate in this. it seems like, once again, something is being “shoved down our throats” by New York and Chicago; folks are not ready to be “appeased” by information, no matter how accurate, before they perceive themselves to be understood . Overall lack of accountability by the ELCA. Not understanding how a resolution even makes it to the floor of the Assembly. Wondering how the congregation’s regular social ministry and mission will be affected. Wondering if people will just get mad and quit the church as “the last straw” in many similar disappointments and feelings of powerlessness. Wondering if our congregation must stop ELCA benevolence or drop out of ELCA. Somehow mixed up with racism?

POSSIBLE AGENDA

-----OVERVIEW: Purpose is to listen to the Holy Spirit as we listen to and share with one another regarding the ELCA resolution about Sanctuary.

-----Time Frame. Ideally one hour is enough, but it is possible to go over if everyone agrees. Time limits are also safe limits. Appoint a time keeper!

-----METHOD.

-----Devotions. See suggested scripture and prayer possibilities as examples

-----Listen to understand, not persuade.

-----Listen for the emotion underneath any questions.

-----Have suggested materials available, at least for reference.

-----(option addition. Have a piece of paper and pencil available for each person and ask each to write down one emotion they are experiencing as a result of ELCA resolution. Then write one hope they have for the meeting. Done in silence. Pass this two persons to left Also, if desired, ask folks to write one question for ELCA. All shared after passing. This often brings focus and some sense of being heard. Be ready to proceed quickly if emotions are high. Just go on and get back to this later).

-----Open for expressions of concerns and questions. Refer to actual ELCA/Bishop statements for information, not your opinions. Make sure the scribe takes accurate notes…and that this is obvious to participants. Use of a white board may help.

-----CONCLUSION.

Have time-keeper inform group at 5 minute warning. Ask if last minute questions or concerns are there. Inform folks what will happen as a result of this gathering. Council will decide. End with prayer, Lord’s Prayer and Benediction.

FEEDBACK REQUEST FORM REGARDING ELCA RESOLUTION ABOUT SANCTUARY

THREE QUESTIONS I HAVE FOR THE ELCA ARE

1.

2

3.

THREE CONCERNS I HAVE FOR THE ELCA ARE

1.

2.

3.

THREE PRAYER REQUESTS I HAVE FOR THE ELCA CHURCH COUNCIL AND BISHOP ARE

1.

2.

3.