

Eastern Washington – Idaho Synod Assembly 2018

MEMORIAL 1

CONCERNING THRIVENT FINANCIAL

1 **WHEREAS** over the years Thrivent Financial, a member owned, fraternal organization, and its
2 predecessors have been financial advisors, sold insurance and other financial products to
3 Lutherans and their families; and many Lutherans have served on its boards at the local, regional
4 and national levels, helping to distribute funds to charities and individuals in need either through
5 direct grants or service products; and,

6 **WHEREAS** Thrivent Financial has provided funds and resources to local programs such as
7 Habitat for Humanity, regional Lutheran camps, local and regional food banks, local
8 congregations, church schools and other ministries; and

9 **WHEREAS** Thrivent has opened its membership to other Christians and moved from local
10 branchdecision making regarding many of its grant distributions to Regional Member Networks
11 that may not necessarily appreciate ELCA positions on social issues; and,

12 **WHEREAS** Thrivent has changed its method of fund dispersal to a more individual basis such as
13 Choice Dollars but has limited their use to 501c3 organizations “whose principal purpose is [not]
14 to influence law, policy or church doctrine or practice” thus prohibiting funds to organizations
15 that are dedicated to civil rights, environmental concerns, LGBTQ+ rights, or women's
16 reproductive rights while allowing Choice Dollars to be contributed to such organizations as
17 Christian Life Resources and Focus on the Family, both of which say homosexuality is a sin that
18 can be cured, and want to limit reproductive choice and

19 **WHEREAS** such activities run counter to the ELCA positions on Church in Society; Human
20 Sexuality; Reproductive Choice; and Women and Justice (pending)

21 **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod memorializes the
22 Churchwide Assembly to encourage our Presiding Bishop to express our concern to the Thrivent
23 Financial Home office, about how Thrivent Choice Dollars are being restricted from organizations
24 that support civil rights and congregational inclusion for LGBTQ+ people, and women's
25 reproductive rights; and be it further

26 **RESOLVED** that Thrivent Financial be encouraged to develop a more open and transparent
27 policy allowing individuals to contribute to 501c3 organizations without restrictions as long as
28 they meet IRS criteria and are domiciled in the United States; and be it further

29 **RESOLVED** that regional bishops, pastors and congregations and especially Thrivent Members
30 be encouraged to contact the Thrivent Financial regional vice presidents/general agents, the
31 Regional Member Networks and local agents to express their concerns about how Choice Dollars
32 are limited from progressive charitable organizations; and be it further

33 **RESOLVED** that the ELCA, its synods, its clergy and member congregations and other ministries
34 be encouraged to refrain from activities that promote Thrivent Financial until such concerns
35 are determined to be satisfactorily addressed by the ELCA Church Council.

Submitted by the Congregation Council of Trinity Lutheran, Pullman Washington;
the Rev Wesley Howell, pastor

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- 36 <https://www.thrivent.com/making-a-difference/files/28339C.pdf>
37 <http://www.christianliferesources.com/article/q-a-on-homosexuality-1466>
38 <https://www.focusonthefamily.com/pro-life/pre-born-5>
39 http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Church_SocietySS.pdf?_ga=2.161719736.566966633.1518061216-1986472510.1510789217
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42 http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/SexualitySS.pdf?_ga=2.161079609.566966633.1518061216-1986472510.1510789217
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45 http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/AbortionSS.pdf?_ga=2.135980597.566966633.1518061216-1986472510.1510789217
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48 http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Social_Statement_DRAFT_on_Women_and_Justice.pdf?_ga=2.158589502.566966633.1518061216-1986472510.1510789217
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