

## **RESOLUTION 2023:1**

WHEREAS, we are people of God, and we seek to minister to one another with love and compassion; and

WHEREAS, Rostered Ministers and Parish Ministry Associates are human and therefore subject to behavioral health issues such as substance use disorders, other addictions, and mental health disorders; and

WHEREAS, the recent pandemic has created more stress in the professional work of Rostered Ministers and Parish Ministry Associates increasing their behavioral health issues; and

WHEREAS, most employers have policies or guidelines regarding the proper care of staff; and

WHEREAS, the Synod has not had any guidelines and therefore has been inconsistent in addressing the behavioral health issues among Rostered Ministers and Parish Ministry Associates;

now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Nebraska Synod in assembly direct the Bishop of the Nebraska Synod to appoint a committee to address the issue of Rostered Ministers and Parish Ministry Associates whose work is impaired by behavioral health issues; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this committee research guidelines currently used by other Synods and church bodies regarding Rostered Ministers and Parish Ministry Associates whose work is impaired by behavioral health issues; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this committee develop guidelines to address these issues; and be it further

RESOLVED, that there be various guidelines to guide anyone who is concerned re: the behavioral health of a rostered minister or Parish Ministry Associate. Specific guidelines would be developed for each of the following: Synod staff, colleagues of impaired rostered ministers, elected congregational leaders, congregational members and family members; and be it further

RESOLVED, that there be a guideline for interim Rostered Ministers and Parish Ministry Associates when they follow a ministry that has been damaged by behavioral health issues, and be it further

RESOLVED, that this committee recommend the guidelines above to Synod Assembly for adoption in the Nebraska Synod, and be it further

RESOLVED, that this committee recommend to the Synod Council an education or orientation process so that these guidelines can be implemented effectively at both the Synod and congregational level.

Submitted by:

Rev. Otto Schultz, Nebraska Synod Substance Abuse Resource Person

Rev. Glenn Schacht, Morning Star Lutheran Church

Dr. Julie Taylor-Costello, Lutheran Family Services

Rev. Gregory Berger

RECOMMENDATION & RATIONALE OF THE NEBRASKA SYNOD COUNCIL: That resolution 2023:1 be adopted.