

# REPUDIATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF DISCOVERY

Social Policy Resolution  
CA16.02.04



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.

## **Resolved:**

To receive with gratitude memorials from the Alaska, Northwest Washington, Montana, Southwest California, Rocky Mountain, Eastern North Dakota, South Dakota, Minneapolis Area, Saint Paul Area, Arkansas-Oklahoma, Northwest Wisconsin, East-Central Wisconsin, Indiana-Kentucky, Upstate New York, Northwestern Pennsylvania, Metropolitan Washington, D.C., North Carolina and Southeastern synods regarding the Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery;

To repudiate explicitly and clearly the European-derived doctrine of discovery as an example of the "improper mixing of the power of the church and the power of the sword" (Augsburg Confession, Article XXVIII, Latin text), and to acknowledge and repent from this church's complicity in the evils of colonialism in the Americas, which continue to harm tribal governments and individual tribal members;

To offer a statement of repentance and reconciliation to native nations in this country for damage done in the name of Christianity;

To encourage the Office of the Presiding Bishop to plan an appropriate national ceremony of repentance and reconciliation with tribal leaders, providing appropriate worship resources for similar synodical and congregational observances with local tribal leaders, at such times and places as are appropriate;

To direct the Domestic Mission unit, together with the American Indian and Alaska Native community and ecumenical partners, to develop resources to educate members of the ELCA and the wider community about the doctrine of discovery and its consequences for native peoples;

To direct the Domestic Mission unit to develop a strategy with the American Indian and Alaska Native community during the next triennium to be referred to the Church Council for action, including a mechanism to grow the Native American Ministry Fund of the ELCA; and

To affirm that this church will eliminate the doctrine of discovery from its contemporary rhetoric and programs, electing to practice accompaniment with native peoples instead of a missionary endeavor to them, allowing these partnerships to mutually enrich indigenous communities and the ministries of the ELCA.

**Adopted by the Churchwide Assembly in August 2016**