

**Testimony of Pastor Jared Carson, Calvary Lutheran Church Evangelical
Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), Grand Forks, ND
Before the North Dakota Legislative, House Political Subdivisions Committee
In Opposition to HCR 3020**

Chairperson and Members of the House Political Subdivisions Committee,

My name is Pastor Jared Carson, and I serve as a pastor of Calvary Lutheran Church (ELCA) in Grand Forks, ND. I offer this testimony in opposition to House Concurrent Resolution 3020, which urges North Dakota to acknowledge the Kingship of Jesus Christ. While I am a devoted follower of Christ and deeply committed to the Gospel, I believe this resolution is both theologically and constitutionally problematic.

First and foremost, as a Lutheran pastor, I affirm that Jesus Christ is indeed Lord and King, but His reign is not of this world (John 18:36). The Kingdom of God is not advanced through governmental decree but through the transformative power of the Holy Spirit working in the lives of individuals and faith communities. The Lutheran tradition, rooted in the teachings of Martin Luther, upholds the doctrine of the Two Kingdoms, which distinguishes the authority of the Church from that of the State. According to this doctrine, earthly governments exist to maintain justice and peace, while the Church exists to proclaim the Gospel and administer the sacraments. When these two realms become entangled, both the integrity of the government and the mission of the Church are compromised.

From a constitutional perspective, HCR 3020 directly contradicts the foundational principles of religious liberty and pluralism enshrined in the non-establishment clause of First Amendment of the United States Constitution. Our country and state are home to people of many different faiths, as well as those who adhere to no faith at all. To urge the government to recognize Jesus Christ as King is to blur the essential separation of church and state, risking the alienation of those who do not share this belief. Such an action not only undermines the religious freedom of all North Dakotans but also sets a dangerous precedent for government endorsement of religious doctrine.

Furthermore, this resolution does not reflect the humble and servant-hearted kingship of Christ. Jesus Himself rejected political power and calls His followers to love and serve their neighbors rather than seek governmental authority to impose religious belief. As a pastor, my role is to shepherd my congregation in faith and witness to Christ's love—not to seek legislative affirmation of my religious convictions. The Church is most faithful to Christ when it proclaims His Gospel through word and deed, not when it relies on political mechanisms to declare His Kingship.

I urge this committee to reject HCR 3020, not out of opposition to Christ, but out of deep respect for both the integrity of the Christian faith and the foundational principles of our democracy. Let us honor the freedom of conscience that allows each person to respond to the Gospel in their own way, rather than compelling a particular religious affirmation through governmental action.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,
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