**Resolution #2**

**Seafarers & International House**

WHEREAS, Seafarers & International House is an agency of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, founded in 1873 by the Augustana Lutheran Church as a mission for Swedish seafarers in the Port of New York and now serves a multi-national, multi-faith community of seafarers in maritime ports on the North Atlantic seaboard;

WHEREAS, seafarers spend months at sea where they encounter dangerous seas, navigational hazards, boredom, fatigue, separation from home and family, and abuse and exploitation;

WHEREAS, Seafarers & International House endeavors to serve these seafarers by offering them pastoral care, hospitality, social assistance, advocacy and prayer, accomplished through ship visits by port chaplains providing communication equipment (by which to call home and family), newspapers and magazines (by which to re-connect with society), assorted clothing and supplies (not available aboard ship), a van (by which to transport them to places ashore during shore leave) and a pastoral and empathetic ear (by which to share the joys and burdens of the last voyage);

WHEREAS, for the last several years Seafarers International House has extended its port ministry to the Port of Baltimore in the person of Rev. Gerry F. Rickel, on the roster of the Delaware-Maryland Synod of the ELCA, and in that time has served thousands of seafarers whose ships have called on the Port of Baltimore with cargoes of food, clothing, automobiles, household goods and raw materials for the Middle Atlantic States;

WHEREAS, this ministry in the Port of Baltimore is regarded as an important outreach of the wider church and an effective witness to our Lutheran faith; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that Seafarers & International House is hereby regarded as a ministry partner of the Delaware-Maryland Synod of the ELCA;

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Delaware-Maryland Synod and its congregations lift up in prayer the physical, emotional and spiritual well-being of all seafarers, as well as the organizations and individuals in the Port of Baltimore who serve the seafarers;

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Delaware-Maryland Synod hereby declares June 25, 2015 as the “Day of the Seafarer”, and in that regard, invites all congregations and individuals to a seafarer mission reception at the Lutheran Center, 700 Light Street in Baltimore; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that on the occasion of this “Day of the Seafarer” all congregations of the Delaware-Maryland Synod are encouraged to take up a special annual offering in support of Seafarers International House’s port ministry in Baltimore.

Respectfully Submitted by:

The Rev. Gerry Rickel

Paul Erb

Bishop Wolfgang Herz-Lane

Seafarers & International House is a ministry specific to our geographical setting. This ministry serves people from around the world who stop in the Port of Baltimore. It is an opportunity for service, encouragement and witness in the name of Christ.

This resolution seeks to help the congregations of our synod become more aware of this ministry and to increase our commitment to support our ministry partners who minister in the Port of Baltimore.

The Reference and Counsel Committee recommends adoption of this resolution.