

Resolution on same gender marriage

12/2015

=Whereas, June 2015 the U.S. Supreme Court rendered its decision announcing the right of same-gender couples to have equal access to marriage, We recognize that members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) see this as a welcome sign of hope and celebration, while others remain concerned because of their understanding of Scripture. The ELCA social statement "Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust" (2009) neither endorses nor forbids same-gender marriages and recognizes that we have differing understandings and convictions on this matter. In its decision, the court stated that "the First Amendment ensures that religious organizations and persons are given proper protection as they seek to teach the principles that are so fulfilling and so central to their lives and faiths."

=Whereas, this decision affects each one of us too at American Lutheran Church, we recognize that we are not of one mind. But we continue to walk together with prayer, love and respect as we reflect and make corporate decisions.

-- Whereas, the ELCA social statement on human sexuality, all decisions about recognizing, supporting and holding publicly accountable same-gender relationships are entrusted to congregations. Recognizing that the church is not of one mind on this subject, our 2009 actions provide that congregations and clergy should discern together whether to recognize such relationships and to what degree.

-- Whereas, according to ELCA presiding Bishop Eaton, "pastors are to engage in conversation, discernment and partnership with the congregations who have called them prior to solemnizing or presiding over a same-gender marriage. On the other hand, no pastor is obligated to solemnize the marriage of any couple, same-gender or different-gender, who the pastor cannot in good conscience marry."

=Be it resolved that we will not discriminate against any person because of race, age, gender, or orientation, but embrace all persons with God's grace, striving to welcome and support the entire body of Christ. We support that pastoral care be continued for all people, and as members of American Lutheran Church we support each person's civil right to be in a legalized committed relationship and will support and show tolerance to all couples in their own decisions to marry.

--Be it resolved that if a pastor called by American Lutheran Church decides not to solemnize a couple's (same sex or different sex) wedding because of his or her understanding of the Bible or belief in confessional theology or ethical understanding, or good conscience a couple may be married at American Lutheran Church with another ELCA Ordained Clergy in conversation with and approved by the current called pastor.

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