

## RESOLUTION REGARDING SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

In response to a request to have the pastor of this church officiate at a same-sex wedding, this congregation has engaged in three council meetings and three town hall meetings to discuss the matter. After much prayer and discussion, we believe that there is consensus in this congregation on the following matters:

1. All people, regardless of race, sex, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity, are beloved children of God and are made in the image of God.
2. Jesus Christ mandates that we show love for one another, as he has loved us. This love extends to everyone, regardless of race, sex, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity.
3. All people, regardless of race, sex, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity are welcome to worship and participate at First Lutheran Church. We welcome, love, and support the people in our congregation who are members of the LGBT community.
4. All of us are children of a fallen humanity. All people sin and fall short of the glory of God. All of us are totally dependent upon God's grace for our redemption and salvation.
5. Sin in this world includes many kinds of sexual sin, including adultery, fornication, promiscuity, prostitution, and pornography.
6. As Lutherans, we believe that God works in two realms to accomplish his mission for the world: the civil government and the ecclesiastic church. (Luther's two kingdoms)
7. We believe that there are two kinds of marriage: civil marriage, presided over by the state (a judge, magistrate, or justice of the peace) and holy matrimony, presided over by a pastor, priest, rabbi, or other religiously ordained person.
8. Civil marriage is a **contractual agreement** between two people to love and support one another, and be faithful to one another, for as long as they both shall live.
9. Holy matrimony is a **covenant** among three entities: the people getting married and God. In addition to the same promises made to one another in a civil marriage, the two parties getting married also agree to live according to God's law.
10. Both civil marriage and holy matrimony are valid marriages, and are to be recognized as such.

11. Civil marriages promote the government's responsibility to promote equality and non-discrimination. Marriage confer a whole host of legal benefits for the people getting married, including the right to inherit from the other if the other dies without a will. These rights are necessary for a free democratic society.
12. Regarding the passages of scripture that condemn same-sex relations, we have consensus on the belief that if a straight person has sexual relations with someone of the same sex, that it would be a sin. This is because it would be sex without love or commitment, and purely for selfish reasons.
13. We also agree that loving, consensual relations between a husband and wife in a marriage are not sinful.
14. We have heard stories of congregations who will not baptize children of same-sex couples. We find such stories abhorrent and unchristian.

We do NOT have consensus about the nature of sexual relations between two people of the same sex who are in a loving, monogamous relationship. Some, including the current pastor, believe this is not sinful, because these are not the kinds of relationships that passages in Leviticus, Romans, and other places are addressing. Others feel that this is still sinful because the Bible passages condemning same sex relations make no exception for two people in a loving, monogamous relationship. We believe that whether one is supportive of same-sex marriage or not, all of us are making a good faith effort to interpret scripture faithfully. While we have consensus that God ordains marriage between a man and a woman, we are not in consensus about whether God would ordain a marriage between two people of the same sex or not. We are concerned about enacting a policy that is not clearly supported by scripture.

THEREFORE, this council adopts the following resolution:

- 1) First Lutheran Church will continue to be a congregation that loves and welcomes all of God's people, regardless of race, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender identity.
- 2) Although the congregation is not unanimous on this, there is a consensus that it is good and right for the state to allow two people of the same sex to be married in a civil wedding, presided over by a judge, magistrate, or justice of the peace, to promote concepts of fairness, equality, and non-discrimination.
- 3) First Lutheran Church recognizes that all marriages allowed by law, be they civil weddings or covenants of holy matrimony, are valid and should be recognized as such, including civil weddings of same-sex couples and covenants of Holy Matrimony of same-sex couples that are married in other congregations.

- 4) Because we have no consensus on the issue of same-sex marriage within the church, and because we are fearful of initiating church policy that is not sanctioned by God, we believe that this congregation should not change our wedding policy to include same-sex couples.
- 5) With deep sorrow, we acknowledge that this decision may cause pain to members of our congregation who we love, especially those who are LGBT. We hope they forgive us if we have caused them pain. We ask them to stay as members of this congregation where they will be loved and accepted as full and equal members of the body of Christ; to join us in our ministries and at the communion table. If they marry in a civil ceremony, or marry in another church, we will recognize the marriage as valid. If they have children, we will baptize their children and welcome them as workers with us in the kingdom of God.
- 6) This resolution will be posted on the church's website.