

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Greetings in the name of our Crucified and Risen Savior, Jesus, this Holy week.

Like many of you, we were saddened and offended by Iowa Supreme Court ruling regarding “same sex marriage” and the response of the leaders of the Iowa Legislature ruling out any effort to overturn the decision or even discuss it.

Today there are voices telling us that we must learn to “accept” the changes that are taking place in society. The reality is, society no longer values the church’s role, is suspicious of our views, and considers us irrelevant. Society has lost its moral foundation upon which to base any decisions regarding true and false, good and evil, right and wrong.

As Lutheran Christians we have a duty and an unprecedented opportunity to speak to society the will of God as revealed to us in His Holy Word for this is the only solid foundation upon which a civilized society can stand. The Law of God declares that homophile behavior is intrinsically sinful (Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Rom.1:24–27). The Gospel declares that Jesus Christ is the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world (1 John 2:2) and that Christ, who knew no sin, was made to be our sin so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:21). The church’s proper evangelical work is to proclaim the reconciliation of the sinner to God in the death of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5:18–19).

Therefore, we cannot be silent regarding the Supreme Court’s ruling, but must faithfully and publicly speak against it. For we are “a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that ‘we’ may declare the praises of him who called ‘us’ out of darkness into his wonderful light.” I Peter 2:9

We will continue to define marriage as God has, “a lifelong union of one man and one woman.” We will celebrate His gift to us and defend marriage as Martin Luther reminds us in his explanation of the sixth commandment, “*We* should fear and love God so that *we* lead a sexually pure and decent life in what *we* say and do, and husband and wife love and honor each other.”

We encourage our pastors and congregations to minister to homosexuals and their families with love and concern, calling for repentance and offering forgiveness in the Good News of Jesus Christ when there is repentance.

We are attaching a copy of the 2008 letter from Dr. Gerald Kieschnick, President of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in response to the California Supreme Court ruling and a copy of Resolution 3-05A adopted at the LCMS 2004 Convention both of which further clarify our church body’s position. We encourage an “in depth” study of the Bible passages cited so that all of our people might be informed by God’s Word.

We urge all of God’s people to pray for our elected leaders, our legislature, our judges that our God will grant them wisdom and understanding so that they might govern us according to His will so that our nation, our state, our communities, and all people might be truly blessed.

Your Servants in Christ,

Dr. Paul G. Sieveking, President
Iowa District West, LCMS

Dr. Gary M. Arp, President
Iowa District East, LCMS



THE
LUTHERAN CHURCH
Missouri Synod

Office of the President
The Reverend Dr. Gerald B. Kieschnick

**Statement from the President of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
in Response to California Supreme Court Ruling on Same-Sex “Marriage”
June 24, 2008**

The recent decision of the California Supreme Court legalizing same-sex “marriage” highlights the downward spiral of moral values that is becoming so prevalent in our culture. This most recent action contravenes not only the Judeo-Christian values that have defined the moral compass of this great nation, but also the laws of nature and the natural reproductive process.

In the face of such moral decline, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) has consistently upheld the Bible-based values that designate “marriage as the lifelong union of one man and one woman (Genesis 2:2–24; Matthew 19:5–6)” (2004 LCMS Convention Resolution 3-05a, attached. All subsequent quotations are from this resolution). The LCMS has consistently held that “homosexual behavior is prohibited in the Old and New Testaments [of Holy Scripture] (Leviticus 18:22, 24; 20:13; 1 Corinthians 6:9–20; 1 Timothy 1:10) as contrary to the Creator’s design (Romans 1:26–27).”

As a Christian body in this country, the LCMS has the duty and responsibility to speak publicly in disagreement with this action of the California Supreme Court. In the present context we cannot be silent, since such silence “could be viewed as acceptance of the homosexual lifestyle.” Accordingly, we as a church body urge our leaders, members, congregations, and all Christians, “to give a public witness from Scripture against the social acceptance and legal recognition of homosexual ‘marriage.’”

While this occasion calls us to declare that homosexual behavior is both unnatural and sinful, (see Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Romans 1:24–27), we also recognize that it is necessary to respond to these “sexual sins with the same love and concern as all other sins, calling for repentance and offering forgiveness in the Good News of Jesus Christ when there is repentance.”

“The Gospel declares that Jesus Christ is the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world (1 John 2:2) and that Christ, who knew no sin, was made to be our sin so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21). It is the church’s proper evangelical work to proclaim the reconciliation of the sinner to God in the death of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:18–19) in a spirit of compassion and humility, recognizing that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus (Romans 3:23–24).”

Finally, we pray that all people, especially men and women properly united as husbands and wives, will honor God’s divinely ordained relationship of marriage. And we pray that all husbands and wives will “give thanks to God for the blessings of marriage, lead a chaste and decent life, and each love and honor one’s spouse.”

Dr. Gerald B. Kieschnick, President
The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod

“Transforming lives through Christ’s love ... in time ... for eternity ...” John 3:16-17

**2004 Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
RESOLUTION 3-05A
To Affirm Marriage as Union of One Man and One Woman**

WHEREAS, The LCMS, in convention, in 1973, stated in Res. 2-04 (Proceedings, p. 110): “That the Synod recognize homophile behavior as intrinsically sinful” (Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Rom.1:24–27); and

WHEREAS, The Gospel declares that Jesus Christ is the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world (1 John 2:2) and that Christ, who knew no sin, was made to be our sin so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:21); and

WHEREAS, The church’s proper evangelical work is to proclaim the reconciliation of the sinner to God in the death of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5:18–19); and

WHEREAS, The Synod, in convention (2001 Res. 2-08A), encouraged its congregations “to minister to homosexuals and their families in a spirit of compassion and humility, recognizing that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus (Rom. 3:23–24)”; and

WHEREAS, Many in American society are demanding legal recognition of same-sex unions as “marriages” by appeals to “equality under the law” (e.g., the Supreme Court of the State of Massachusetts, Feb. 4, 2004); and

WHEREAS, God gave marriage as a picture of the relationship between Christ and His bride the Church (Eph. 5:32); and

WHEREAS, Homosexual behavior is prohibited in the Old and New Testaments (Lev. 18:22, 24; 20:13; 1 Cor. 6:9–20; 1 Tim. 1:10) as contrary to the Creator’s design (Rom. 1:26–27); and

WHEREAS, For our Synod to be silent, especially in the present context, could be viewed as acceptance of the homosexual lifestyle; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod urge its members to give a public witness from Scripture against the social acceptance and legal recognition of homosexual “marriage”; and be it further

Resolved, That in ministering to homosexuals, “A Plan for Ministry to Homosexuals and Their Families,” prepared by the President’s Task Force, be commended as a resource for study and a guide for pastoral care; and be it further

Resolved, That the members of the Synod deal with sexual sins with the same love and concern as all other sins, calling for repentance and offering forgiveness in the Good News of Jesus Christ when there is repentance; and be it further

Resolved, That husbands and wives give thanks to God for the blessings of marriage, lead a chaste and decent life, and each love and honor one’s spouse; and be it finally

Resolved, That the LCMS, in convention, affirm, on the basis of Scripture, marriage as the lifelong union of one man and one woman (Gen. 2:2–24; Matt. 19:5–6).