

## Comments from Pastor Steve Trewartha To Holy Trinity Congregation

August 29/30, 2009

Some of you have probably read the news or heard about recent votes in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Among many other matters, passed was a resolution that the ELCA is to find ways **for the congregations that choose to do so**, to “recognize, support and hold publicly accountable, life-long, monogamous, same gender relationships.”

The assembly also voted to allow gay and lesbian pastors and other professional workers who live in committed, faithful, monogamous, lifelong relationships, to be able to serve in the church, so long as they meet all the other standards and procedures already in place.

Previously, there was a policy that allowed gays into the ordained ministry only if they remained celibate.

We probably do not all fully agree on these and other matters. What we need to be in agreement on is the central role the words of the Bible play in our deliberating. I am personally discouraged and saddened by this vote—first that the vote was taken. I don’t think this is the proper venue, nor process for voting on important theological tenets. It feels to me, a little like voting on gravity. I am saddened, that in my opinion, a study of what the scriptures say on this topic, was not central to the decision making process.

Importantly, the assembly also approved that we are to “respect the difference of opinions on the matter (of sexuality) and honor the ‘bound consciences’ of those who disagree.”

We will not change the way we conduct the mission of the church at Holy Trinity. As we have always strived to do in the past, we will respect, honor, love and welcome people of all stripes ... AND, we will use the Inspired WORD of GOD, the Scriptures as our norm and guide in our thinking, in our study and all affairs of our being the church—in our teaching, preaching, Bible Studies and living out the Christian faith.

While we are looking at what our options are as a church, and where we go from here, we will hold central to our teaching what the Bible plainly says and reveals to us on matters such as these. I welcome and encourage your dialogue on this, always making the Bible central to our conversation.

If you are interested, I have made available two articles. One, “**Loving our Homosexuality Neighbor**” by Pastor Dave Glesne. And the other, “**The Bible and Homosexuality**” written by myself. They are in the church office.

**Pastor Steve Trewartha**