



**EASTERN SYNOD**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada**

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Dear Synod Family,

Grace and peace be unto you!

This past weekend, the ELCIC Eastern Synod Council reviewed the National Church Council's September 2006 ruling challenging the jurisdictional legitimacy of our synod's July 2006 resolution affirming a local option on the blessing of persons in committed same-gender relationships. Our discussion took place within the context of a retreat wherein the vast bulk of our agenda was spent seeking ways of implementing our synod's renewed vision for more faithfully striving to be A Church in Mission for Others.

After significant conversation, the Eastern Synod Council has determined that the Eastern Synod had both the right and obligation to pass this motion. We believe, however, that it would be prudent to refrain from acting upon it at this present time. As such, we receive the ruling of National Church Council with deep regret.

The Synod Council continues to believe that the congregational local option is an appropriate way to proceed given the wide polarity of opinions that are so evident within the life of our church vis a vis this question. In our view, this approach provides a reasonable accommodation that allows for a diversity of practice, without compromising the church's ability to faithfully address broader ethical and theological questions concerning human sexuality. This, we believe, was the reality which prompted 72% of the delegates to our 2006 Synod Assembly to vote in favour of this motion in July 2006. This action cannot be interpreted as an unequivocal endorsement of the appropriateness of partnered same gendered relationships. It was, however, an overwhelming affirmation of our synod's desire to find a way to live together faithfully in the midst of diversity. We continue to believe that this decision was both wise and appropriate given present realities.

In conclusion, while it is not our desire to seek churchwide endorsement of practices which many in good conscience cannot support, it is our desire and intent to make adequate provision for a diversity of practice concerning an important issue where members of our church hold legitimate, but opposing views. We remain committed to honouring the ecclesiastical accountabilities as outlined in our church's constitutional documents and will continue to faithfully address the challenging questions that lie before us by engaging the legitimate decision-making mechanisms of our church.

With all best wishes,

The Rev. Michael J. Pryse, Bishop  
MJP:cd