

Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust

A Social Statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) adopted August 19, 2009

Study Committee Document
Submission to Grace Lutheran Church Council
January 11, 2011

Part 1: Format of the Committee

Members chosen by Church Council on April 13, 2010

Barbara Eidahl (co-chair)
Peter Hestekin (co-chair)
Charles Hill (co-chair)
Deann Bergeson
Judith Cahow
G. Mitchell Piper
Susan Singerhouse
Nancy Smith (resigned from committee due to health reasons 9/27/2010)
Dale Reid

Karen Bullock - ad hoc (Church Council President resignation 9/14/2010)

Anne Carter - ad hoc (Church Council President since 9/14/2010)

Pastor David Irgens- ad hoc (staff member assisting with information and questions of committee)

- First meeting of Study Committee: May 10, 2010
- Meeting frequency: every other Monday, 6 PM — 8 PM (or longer)
- Total times met: Eighteen
- Roberts Rules of Order was the structure of the meetings.
- Minutes were taken at each of the Study Committee meetings and distributed to all members for review. The minutes served as a written update for the Church Council president to take to the Church Council meetings monthly.
- Dates met with Church Council: September 7, 2010; October 12, 2010; October 26, 2010

Part 2: The Charge of the Committee

SECTION A Study the August 19th Church Wide Assembly votes, and study of the actual resulting documents.

1. The committee should actually read the documents resulting from the August 2009 Church Wide Assembly meeting and voting.

During private study between the initial meeting times, each of the Study Committee members read the document in its entirety. Due to the length and overwhelming amount of information, each committee member took one section of the document and prepared an outline and summary of the section that was assigned. The members then reported on their specific section in order for all to have a clear understanding of each of the sections of the document.

The Study Committee references the social statement “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust” document stating:

“Although at this time this church lacks consensus on this matter, it encourages all people to live out their faith in the local and global community of the baptized with profound respect for the conscience-bound belief of the neighbor. This church calls for mutual respect in relationships and for guidance that seeks the good of each individual and of the community. Regarding our life together as we live with disagreement, the people in this church will continue to accompany one another in study, prayer, discernment, pastoral care, and mutual respect.” (“Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust.” A Social Statement of the ELCA, p.10)

This social statement cites the following regarding same sex marriage:

“The church’s historical experience supports its confidence that solemn promises, made before a company of witnesses who ask for God’s blessing on a man and a woman, have the power to create a unique framework within which two people, a new family, and the community may thrive.

Consistent with that experience, this church has confidence that such promises, supported by the contractual framework of civil law, can create a lifetime relationship of commitment and cooperation.

Recognizing that this conclusion differs from the historic Christian tradition and the Lutheran Confessions, some people, though not all, in this church and within the larger Christian community, conclude that marriage is also the appropriate term to use in describing similar benefits, protection, and support for same-gender couples entering into lifelong, monogamous relationships. They believe that such accountable relationships also provide the necessary foundation that supports trust and familial and community thriving. Other contractual agreements, such as civil unions, also seek to provide some of these protections and to hold those involved in such relationships accountable to one another and to society.” (“Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust.” A Social Statement of the ELCA, p.10)

The following statement refers to cohabitation: *“Because this church urges couples to seek the highest social and legal support for their relationships, it does not favor cohabitation arrangements outside of marriage.”* (“Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust.” A Social Statement of the ELCA, p. 17)

A number of Study Committee members and a number of congregation members have voiced concern regarding the Resolutions following the adoption of “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust.” The orders of resolutions were voted on are as follows:

- Resolution 3: “RESOLVED, that in the implementation of any resolutions on ministry policies, the ELCA commits itself to bear one another’s burdens, love the neighbor, and respect the bound consciences of all.” (Adopted 771-230 as amended) CA09.05.03
- Resolution 1: “RESOLVED, that the ELCA commit itself to finding ways to allow congregations that choose to do so to recognize, support and hold publicly accountable life-long, monogamous, same-gender relationships.” (Adopted 619-402) CA09.05.24
- Resolution 2: “RESOLVED, that the ELCA commit itself to finding a way for people in such publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships to serve as rostered leaders of this church.” (Adopted 559-451) CA09.05.26

<http://www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/Social-Issues/Social-Statements/JTF-Human-Sexuality/Message-to-Rostered-Leaders.aspx>

2. The committee should understand the *study process that preceded* these decisions, and the make-up of the representatives that voted upon them.

The social statement regarding sexuality came to the Church Wide Assembly in 2001. The committee studied the process of how memorials are brought forth to the churchwide assembly. *“Among the many duties of the voting members at the 2009 Church Wide Assembly in Minneapolis is the consideration of actions taken by synodical assemblies (memorials) and proposals brought to the agenda by the voting members themselves (resolutions).”*

<http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Office-of-the-Secretary/ELCA-Governance/Churchwide-Assembly/About/Preparation-Information/Memorials-and-Resolutions.aspx>

Fourteen ELCA members (former bishops, theologians, pastors and teachers) were chosen by Bishop Mark J. Hanson to work on the statement as a Task Force at the 2001 Church Wide Assembly of the ELCA. The social statement was commissioned as a six year study with the intention of developing a draft of a statement for sexuality to present to the 2007 Church Wide Assembly, however, brought to a vote in 2009.

- Timeline from 2001 to 2010 <http://www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/Social-Issues/Social-Statements/JTF-Human-Sexuality/Time-Line-and-Events.aspx>
- Historical documents <http://www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/Social-Issues/Social-Statements/JTF-Human-Sexuality/Faithful-Journey-Resources/Historical-Documents.aspx>

“The members of the task force read and heard thousands of comments from throughout this church and concluded in its 2005 report, “It has become clear to the task force that the disagreement over these issues before the church is deep, pervasive, multi-faceted, and multi-layered. This church is not of one mind.” (2007 Church Wide Assembly Minutes. Plenary Session Seven, p. 166)

The Statement was presented to the Church Wide Assembly in August 2009 and a vote based upon bound conscience was taken by the voting members. There were 1037 voting members at the assembly in 2009. Lay members totaled 634; Clergy voting members totaled 403. Two-thirds (66.66%) of the majority of the voters were required to approve the Human Sexuality statement. The Statement was approved by a majority of 66.69%.

Twenty-two voting members were elected at the Northwest Wisconsin Synod to vote at the ELCA Church Wide Assembly. These voting members do not represent anyone’s viewpoint other than their own by following their bound conscience. Grace Lutheran Church is part of the Chippewa Valley Conference of the NW Synod of WI. There were one clergy and two lay members from the Chippewa Valley Conference at the 2009 Church Wide Assembly.

<http://archive.elca.org/assembly/03/unitreports/020INTROfinal.pdf>

There are seven Conferences in the NW Synod of WI. They are:

- Apple River
- Chequamegon
- Chippewa Valley
- Dairyland
- Heart of the North
- Lake Superior
- St.Croix Valley

3. The committee *may* discuss and prepare any questions about these documents.

It was necessary for the study committee to understand what a social statement is and why the ELCA has social statements. *“Social statements are social policy documents, adopted by an ELCA Church Wide Assembly, used in addressing significant social issues. They provide an analysis and interpretation of an issue, set forth basic theological and ethical perspectives related to it, and offer guidance for the ELCA, its individual members, and its affiliated agencies and institutions. They are a product of extensive and inclusive deliberation within this church.”*

<http://www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/Social-Issues/Social-Statements.aspx>

“Lutherans believe advocacy is a public witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ where the Church speaks with and on behalf of others in need.

“ELCA advocacy works for change in public policy based on the experience of Lutheran ministries, programs, and projects around the world and in communities across the United States..

“The advocacy office takes position consistent with [ELCA social policy language](#), and with reference to this church’s membership in ecumenical and international bodies.”

Social Statements are teaching tools which may also be used to present our beliefs to politicians in Washington DC to help in advocacy efforts.

<http://www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/Social-Issues/Policies-and-Procedures.aspx>

There are Ten Social Statements that have been adopted by the ELCA since 1991 when the first social statement was voted upon. These ten statements are listed as follows:

ELCA Social Statements <http://www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/Social-Issues/Social-Statements.aspx> October 9, 2010.

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| 1. Abortion (1991) | 6. Peace (1995) |
| 2. Church in Society (1991) | 7. Economic Life (1999) |
| 3. Death Penalty (1991) | 8. Health and Healthcare (2003) |
| 4. Environment (1993) | 9. Education (2007) |
| 5. Race, Ethnicity, and Culture (1993) | 10. Sexuality (2009) |

There are three more statements in the development stages. The current Social Statements being research by a task force include the following:

- i. Criminal Justice
- ii. Genetics
- iii. Human Disabilities

ELCA Social Statements <http://www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/Social-Issues/Social-Statements.aspx>

It is noted that the previous and upcoming social statements are not in the scope of this Study Committee to research or act upon, however, the information was of use to understand why social statements are necessary.

The Study Committee conducted research regarding the cost of this social statement. *“A six-year time line for the studies on sexuality, with focus on two time periods: 2002–2005, with greater attention to the issues surrounding homosexuality, while discussion of sexuality proceeds in tandem; and 2006 – 2007, with attention to the development of a draft of a social statement on sexuality for presentation to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly...”* *“A total budget of \$1.15 million for the six-year study, which includes costs for meetings of the task force, writers, hearings and focus groups, printing and distribution of resources, and staffing.”*

<http://www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/Social-Issues/Resolutions/2002/CC02,-p-,04,-p-,10-Studies-on-Sexuality.aspx>

The Study Committee questioned if this is typical for cost of a social statement. Typical social statements cost approximately \$35,000/year and takes about 4-5 years for a task force to research and submit.

<http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Communication-Services/News/Releases.aspx?a=3662>

It is our understanding the subject matter is very complex for this social statement “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust.” There was a great amount of time, money, and energy in getting reports and drafts out to the synods and congregations for review and comment. The development of all Social Statements cost money. In general, the money comes from the general budget. A social statement is paid through The Church in Society program and is listed in the ELCA Expense Budget.

The Study Committee spent at least two meetings discussing and seeking to understand what ‘bound conscience’ means as referenced in Resolution #2 CA09.05.03. According to the ELCA:

“The idea of a conscience being “bound” to a particular interpretation of Scripture and confessional understanding is rooted in the Bible (See Romans 14 and I Corinthians 8, for instance) and the Lutheran heritage. It does not mean that a person simply declares ‘him or herself’ to be bound to a particular interpretation of Scripture and tradition. Rather, it puts the emphasis on how each Christian is called to respect and protect other believers with whom they disagree when those positions are also tied to their faith and to a carefully reasoned, thoughtful interpretation of Scripture and tradition. This is one way that each person can bear the burden of the differences on this matter.”

<http://www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/Social-Issues/Social-Statements/JTF-Human-Sexuality/cwafaqs.aspx>

4. The committee may invite experts to present the documents, to answer prepared questions.

The Study Committee invited and met with two Assistants to the Bishop for the NW Synod of WI, Rev. Tod Iverson and Rev. Amy Odgren. Questions were prepared ahead of time and sent to the guests. Numerous e-mails and/or phone calls have been placed by committee members in follow-up from the meeting to the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, Synod Office, 944 24 ¼ Street Suite 2, Chetek, WI 54728. 715-839-6810 <http://www.nwswi.org/>

5. The committee should determine the impact of the documents upon the whole ELCA.

The impact of the documents from the August 2009 Church Wide Assembly “The Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust” statement and the resulting three resolutions on the ELCA as a whole are as follows:

- “The 2010 ELCA churchwide budget was revised mid-year and a reduction of \$4.2 million in current fund spending by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) was made to maintain a balance of income and spending for 2010 through Aug. 31,” said Christina Jackson-Skelton, ELCA treasurer. However, in a report to ELCA leaders, she expressed concern about continuing declines in mission support income to the churchwide organization, down \$5 million so far this year. This revision was due to, “a 30-year trend in declining revenues, the struggling U.S. economy and declines in congregational income due to the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly’s decisions on human sexuality.” (Rev. M. Wyvetta Bullock, ELCA executive for administration, in a June 21 e-mail to churchwide staff <http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Communication-Services/News/Releases.aspx#&&a=4556>).
- Due to decreased revenue, the ELCA is ending its involvement in the Lutheran Malaria Initiative by backing out of a proposed \$30 million fundraising campaign to the United Nations Foundation (UNF) <http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Communication-Services/News/Releases.aspx?a=4645>
- Bishop Hanson said he will present to the ELCA Church Council in November 2010 a proposal for developing an ELCA Malaria campaign instead. <http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Communication-Services/News/Releases.aspx#&&a=4653>

- Three times since April 2009, the ELCA Church Council cut the denomination’s budget by a total of \$17.5 million and eliminated the equivalent of nearly 76 full-time jobs.
- ELCA has a newly designed Rite of Reception to receive back into the ELCA rosters homosexual and transgender pastors who are in a publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationship. <http://www.elca.org/~media/Files/Worship/Rites/2009%20Rites/Reception%20to%20the%20Roster%20of%20Ordained%20Ministers%20WATERMARK.pdf>
- Seven homosexual and transgender pastors were received onto the roster in San Francisco. Similar ceremonies are planned in Minneapolis and Chicago during 2010.
- Revised Visions and Expectations now include Pastors in a publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationship. <http://www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith/Vocation/Rostered-Leadership/Ordained-Ministry/Vision-Expectations.aspx>
- Board of Pensions has revised its documents to read “partner” instead of spouse, (<http://www.elca.org/~media/Files/Growing%20in%20Faith/Vocation/Ministry%20Policies/ELCAaffidavitpshp.pdf>) and a form developed for dissolution of partnerships. (<http://www.elca.org/~media/Files/Growing%20in%20Faith/Vocation/Ministry%20Policies/ELCAaffidavittermpshp.pdf>)
- Curriculum changes reflect subject matter in “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust” social statement in ELCA seminaries.
- Total mission support income through congregational giving through Aug. 31, 2010 was \$28.7 million, a 14.8 percent decrease from the same period in 2009.
- Strained relationships with a number of foreign synods have been addressed both locally and nationally in the ELCA.
- Bishop Pederson shared communication with members of Grace’s Global Relation Committee regarding the spring visit of Malawians to our synod. While he is not aware of severed relationships, he offered this statement: *“The Lutheran churches in Africa are indeed very conservative on most matters of sexuality and are, in fact, wrestling with ELCA 2009 decisions.”*

- i. ELCA News Service 4/7/2010: <http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Communication-Services/News/Releases.aspx#&&a=4494>
- ii. Tanzania (ELCT): <http://www.elct.org/news/2010.04.004.html>
- iii. Hispanic- Florida & Bahamas: <http://www.lutherancore.org/papers/hispanic-response.shtml>
- iv. China: <http://www.lutherancore.org/papers/ELCA-Chinese-leaders-response.shtml>
- v. Ethiopia: <http://www.lutherancore.org/papers/response-ethiopian-09.shtml>
- vi. Oromo (churches in Africa, Australia, Canada, Europe and US): http://www.oromogospel.org/news/index.php?subaction=showfull&id=1259250102&archive=&start_from=&ucat=2

Congregations in the ELCA

January 1, 2004 through period ending October 31, 2010

Year (Jan-Dec)	Total # of Congregations in the ELCA	#Congregations Increase/Decrease From Previous Year
2004	10,585	-72
2005	10,549	-36
2006	10,470	-79
2007	10,448	-22
2008	10,396	-52
2009	10,348	-48
2010*		-156

*These numbers were taken off the roster officially, however another 54 have yet to be removed from the ELCA rosters, but they have passed the 2nd vote to leave as of 10/31/2010. The total reported is unofficially 210 have voted to leave the ELCA period 1/1/2010 – 10/31/2010.

<http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Communication-Services/News/Resources/Stats.aspx>

ELCA Increase/Decrease Revenue AND ELCA Congregational Mission Support January 1, 2006 through period ending October 31, 2010

Year (Jan – Dec)	Revenue (millions)	Increase/Decrease % from previous year	Congregational Mission Support	Increase/Decrease % from previous year
2006	\$83.0 M	1.1	\$65.7 M	0.3
2007	\$83.6 M	0.7	\$66.1 M	0.7
2008	\$83.4 M	-0.2	\$65.3 M	-1.3
2009	\$76.5 M	-8.2	\$59.7 M	-8.6
2010**	\$46.8 M	-14	\$36.6 M	-14.4

**January 1, 2010 – period ending October 31, 2010

<http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Office-of-the-Treasurer/Financial-Reports.aspx>

6. The committee should determine and document any actual impact of these documents (resulting from the August 2009 Church Wide Assembly) on Grace Lutheran Church.

A survey, not a vote, was distributed by the Study Committee in attempt to answer this question. Grace Lutheran has 635 confirmed members and lists 1680 individual members. 367 forms were returned, therefore this was not a true representation of the congregation, merely snap shot. There is not a clear majority one way or another regarding agreement or disagreement of the social statement. It was apparent that more education is needed regarding the social statement. The majority of the congregation felt that Grace Lutheran Church is their church home.

As of November 1, 2010, 27% of the congregation returned pledge cards for the 2011 budget. Approximately 720 pledge cards were mailed out to the congregation, around 190 were returned. Approximately one dozen families have asked that their contributions go only to Grace Lutheran Church and not the ELCA for 2011. The committee is unsure if the number pledging or designation to only Grace Lutheran Church is due to the economy, the social statement, or other factors.

SECTION B Study the range of possible responses because of these documents that may be implemented by Grace Lutheran Church.

1. Going “Evangelical Free”, or “post denominational,” Grace Lutheran Church would then not affiliate with any other churches, seminaries, synods, or their resources.

The Study Committee reviewed the above statement, researched, and read the Constitution and By Laws of Grace Lutheran Church (2004) section C7.04 that states the following:

“If a two-thirds majority of the voting members of this congregation present at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to become independent or relate to a non-Lutheran church body, title to property of this congregation shall continue to reside in this congregation only with the consent of the Synod Council. The Synod Council, after consultation with this congregation by the established synodical process, may give approval to the request to become independent or to relate to a non-Lutheran church body, in which case title shall remain with the majority of this congregation. If the Synod council fails to give such approval, title shall remain with those members who desire to continue as a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.”

To retain the property, Grace Lutheran Church would have to remain affiliated with a Lutheran denomination. This statement is based on conversation with synod representatives and Grace’s Constitution documents.

2. Keeping the status quo, and remain with the ELCA.

The committee struggled some with what “status quo” refers to. The Study Group determined this meant the congregation remains with the ELCA. If further concerns of the social statement are due to the resolutions noted earlier in this report, there is a document that the ELCA had drafted that congregations may adopt. This document is titled “Congregational Declaration” that is suitable for adoption by a Congregation Council or at a Congregational Meeting. This is an ‘opt out’ declaration for not calling a pastor or lay rostered leader who is or intends to be in a same-gender relationship. This document also states “*marriages, civil unions, or blessing of persons in same gender relationships will not be performed in the church building or authorized by this congregation.*” The document continues: “*It does not need to become a constitutional provision or by-law, but will act as a Continuing Resolution, in effect until it is lifted by the Council or congregation.*” See Congregational Declaration attached.

http://www.nwswi.org/webfiles/fnitools/documents/congregational_declaration_-_rostered_ministry_and_unions.pdf

3. Affiliating with another “non-synod” group in addition to the ELCA. Entities studied should include, but not limited to, the following: A) Lutheran CORE , “Coalition for Renewal”, currently not a synod so this is possible. B) Lutherans Concerned – North America, also known as “Reconciled in Christ”. C) WordAlone, somewhat affiliated with the ELCA.

As stated in the Grace Lutheran Church Constitution and By Laws, Grace Lutheran Church cannot be an affiliate with any other Lutheran body unless approved by the Synod Council of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin. Refer to Section B, number 1 above for reference and section.

The Study Committee also found that there cannot be two affiliations – the ELCA and another “non-synod” group. A memorandum by ELCA Secretary David D. Swartling dated January 19, 2010 (http://www.nwswi.org/webfiles/fnitools/documents/no_dual_rostering.pdf) discusses this.

4. Leaving the ELCA in favor of another Synod or other Church affiliation. Study of other synods should be thorough, possible using an Excel spreadsheet format to compare and contrast the varied dogma associated with each synod. The Select Committee should consult with GLC Council to develop a list of criteria we wish to investigate.

Please refer to “Lutheran Denomination Comparison Chart” at the end of this document

SECTION C The Select Committee will recommend possible courses of action (if any) that the Grace Lutheran (GL) Council might follow, and prepare information regarding the impact upon 1) Grace Lutheran Church itself; 2) Grace Lutheran Foundation; and 3) The surrounding community.

1) Grace Lutheran Church

Please refer to Section A, #6, on page 7 that discusses the impact the “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust” social statement has on Grace Lutheran Church. The Study Committee recommends to the Church Council listening sessions with Grace Lutheran Church members be held to review this final document and an opportunity for members to respond in the near future.

2) Grace Lutheran Foundation, Inc.

Grace Lutheran Foundation, Inc. is a separate 501(c) (3) organization. It does not rely on Grace Lutheran Church or the ELCA for its non-profit status. Grace Lutheran Foundation, Inc. does not have any direct tie to the ELCA.

The Foundation has a unique relationship with Grace Lutheran Church. The Foundation was created by Grace Lutheran Church as a separate entity and shares the same voting membership. The Church’s nominating committee nominates candidates for the Board of Directors of Grace Lutheran Foundation, Inc. from Grace Lutheran Church members; who have served on a Church Board, Committee or the Church Council. There are two ex-officio members of the Foundation’s Board (with voting rights); they are the President and the Senior Pastor of Grace Lutheran Church.

The foundation voting membership would have to approve any change in membership, eligibility for nomination to the Board of Directors, and the method of nominating Board members.

Reference: Grace Lutheran Foundation, Inc. Bylaws amended April 2010.

3) The surrounding community

The committee recommends members of Grace Lutheran Church study, pray, and choose a path for Grace Lutheran which will allow Grace to continue to grow its many ministries. These ministries include, but are not limited to community support and outreach, television and radio ministry, food pantry, and local and global missions. By doing this, we ask that Grace Lutheran continue to retain membership, grow and be a welcoming place as we are showered in God’s love we boldly invite, involve, and inspire all people to make Christ known.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Eidahl (co-chair)
Peter Hestekin (co-chair)
Charles Hill (co-chair)
Deann Bergeson

Judith Cahow
G. Mitchell Piper
Susan Singerhouse
Dale Reid

COMPARISON OF LUTHERAN DENOMINATIONS

Church Body	# of Members	# of Congregations	History	Beliefs	
				Interpretation of Scripture	Social Statement
The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) www.lcms.org	2.5 million	6,075	1847-German	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspired & inerrant Word of God Orthodox, liturgical 	Traditional views of marriage, homosexual behavior, abortion
Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) www.wels.net	380,000	1,200 in US 24 countries	1850-German	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subscribes to the Lutheran Reformation teaching of <i>Solascriptura</i> (scripture alone) Bible is the only standard by which church teachings can be judged 	Extramarital sex and homosexual relations are sins
Association of Free Churches (AFLC) (LFC until 1962) www.aflc.org		275 in 25 states; 4 in Canada	1962- 40 congregations (did not wish to join the ALC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holy Bible is the complete written Word of God preserved to us by the Holy Spirit Authentic & infallible source of God's revelation to us Inerrant & completely adequate source & norm of Christian doctrine & life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biblical citations on 30 topics Nine documents
Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC) www.lcmc.net		284 total 236 in US 48 in other countries	2000- Started by "Word Alone" (did not wish to remain in ELCA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canonical Scriptures of Old & New Testaments are the Word of God. Inspired by God's spirit speaking through their authors Record & announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ God's spirit speaks to us to create & sustain Christian faith & fellowship for service in the world. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not make official social statements Pastoral statement affirming the traditional view of marriage

COMPARISON OF LUTHERAN DENOMINATIONS

Church Body	Role of Women	Marriage 1F/1M
The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) www.lcms.org	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ordination of women as clergy is contrary to scripture • Many women now serve as congregation president, chairperson or Elder. This is a cause of contention within the LCMS 	Marriage between one female and one male
Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) www.wels.net	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scriptures reserved the pastoral office for men • Women may participate in offices and activities of public ministry except where that work involves authority over men 	Marriage between one female and one male
Association of Free Churches (AFLC) (LFC until 1962) www.aflc.org	Women are not ordained	Marriage between one female and one male
Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC) www.lcmc.net	Full role of women including ordination	Marriage between one female and one male

Resource: Richland Lutheran Church, Richland, Washington,
The Preview, "Lutherans in America," January 2010.
<http://www.richlandlutheran.org/22.html>

Barb Eidahl
 Grace Lutheran Study Committee