



St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Winnipeg Policy on Same Gender Marriage

At its National Convention held in 2011, of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) endorsed the blessing of same-gender marriage by its rostered ministers with the proviso that rostered ministers were encouraged at all times to conduct their ministry in consultation with the lay leaders in the congregation and with sensitivity to the culture within which the congregation serves.

Following that convention, St. Mark's congregational council initiated an extensive consultative process with the congregation that involved bible studies, small discussion groups, the opportunity for one-on-one meetings with Pastor Rick and a formal questionnaire survey around the issue of same gender marriage. That process culminated with a special congregational meeting held on April 15, 2012. The motion before that meeting was:

THAT "St. Mark's Lutheran Church, as a congregation of the MNO Synod of the ELCIC, adopts the policy that rostered ministers of this congregation may, according to the dictates of their conscience, preside at or bless legal marriages according to the laws of the province of Manitoba."

An amendment to this main motion to add the words "same or different sex" after "legal" was proposed and passed.

A subsequent vote on the main motion as amended received 75% support from the members present.

The congregation's marriage policy was then updated to read:

"St. Mark's Lutheran Church, as a congregation of the MNO Synod of the ELCIC, affirms that rostered ministers of this congregation may, according to the dictates of their conscience, preside at or bless legal (same or different sex) marriages according to the laws of the province of Manitoba. Ministers from St. Mark's Lutheran Church will perform same sex marriages using the same criteria or discretion that apply to different sex marriages"