



St. Luke's Lutheran Church

Telling people of Jesus Christ

December 10, 2009

To whoever will listen:

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to set us free from this present evil age (Galatians 1:3-4).

We, the council of St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Lima, OH, are frustrated and dismayed by the mess in which we find ourselves. The August actions of the Churchwide Assembly regarding human sexuality have created a major problem for our congregation. Some members say they must leave the ELCA with or without this congregation. Others say they must stay in the ELCA whether at St. Luke's or somewhere else. If this impasse continues, we will splinter. Our family of faith is being stretched, pulled, and bent out of shape, and we are struggling to find a way to remain intact as a congregation.

What kind of outcome did you expect? An issue that has divided the national church for decades has now been passed off to congregations. The attempt to broker a compromise for the national church is now threatening to split congregations. The inability of the Churchwide Assembly to provide clear teaching and direction on a divisive topic has just moved the pressure from the national office to the local congregation. We are angered by your indecisive actions!

The ELCA has been talking about sexuality for years, and has not been able to come to a consensus. That is why we are especially disturbed at how quickly you have changed traditional biblical and confessional understandings of sexuality. Without a clear directive and a solid case for change based on Holy Scripture, these changes leave our congregation dangling on two sides of a razor. How did we come to this point? How could you, whoever "you" are—that's another problem—let this happen?

Furthermore, we find that word of our struggle falls on deaf ears. Letters from members are answered with form letters. Town hall meetings are little more than places to vent and be told "remember, it's OK to disagree." These responses don't provide any real help for a congregation that is strongly opposed to these changes, and yet wants to keep the members in support of the changes in our family.

Our distress is very real and extremely painful. We need a reason to believe that an answer can be found within the ELCA.

With deep concern,

St. Luke's Lutheran Church Council

Beth Arbeit, Paul Assenheimer, Elizabeth Eley, , Jeff Howard, Jennifer Hughes, Dale Laukhuf, Perry Luhn, Keith Mulder, Marcy Reeves, Mila Schwabero, Phil Trueblood, Alison Williams, James Williams, John Williams, and Pastor Lars Olson