

March 10, 2025

I write today as a clergy leader in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). As a Lutheran Deacon, my call is specifically to advocate and serve where the church and the world meet. Marriage is one of those places as it is both a legal contract as well as a religious commitment for people of faith.

As a Christian faith leader, I turn to scripture to guide my understanding and perspective. According to the Old Testament, marriage was not exclusively defined as being between one man and one woman, as we see examples of polygamous marriage and non-marital relationships. In the New Testament book of Galatians, we are reminded that “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:28). In my Christian faith, this is a powerful reminder of the unity and equality we share in Christ. Our unity and equality is bound up in love and grace that is at the heart of Jesus’ teachings. Both my own understanding of scripture and my faith tradition affirm and celebrate the union of two people in marriage regardless of gender. My faith tradition also compels me to advocate for the protection and rights of all people, including same-gendered couples.

As I meet with fellow North Dakotans, and fellow Lutherans around the state, I am struck by their deep sense of community and robust care for their neighbor. They desire that their neighbor thrive and are cared for. HRC 3013 does not reflect care and protection for all people, including the North Dakota residents who have entered into same-gender marriages. This does not reflect North Dakota values and undermines our commitment to neighbor-love.

I urge a Do Not Pass on HRC 3013

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