

January 4, 2010

A position statement from the Congregation Council of Emmanuel Lutheran Church.

## **Our Beliefs**

### **Statement of Faith**

Our foundation of faith is based on Scripture.

We are all sinners before God.

We all depend on God to love us, forgive us, and sustain us.

After prayerful consideration of Scripture, it is our belief that there is not enough compelling evidence for us to reinterpret the Biblical statements about homosexual behavior.

### **Statement of Life Together**

This congregation exists to worship, praise, and serve God.

**ALL** are welcome to worship and participate in the life of Emmanuel Lutheran Church

All those who are baptized and believe that they receive the forgiveness of their sins through their participation are welcome to participate in communion.

We are called to love and serve one another.

We denounce prejudice and stereotyping.

### **National Organization Affiliation**

We are preparing to celebrate 190 years in mission and ministry as a congregation. Our history precedes a national church organization. We have been affiliated with several regional and national church bodies throughout our history. We chose to belong to a larger organization to extend our outreach and for other advantages of size.

The overwhelming majority of the congregational council does not support the vote of the ELCA to roster openly gay pastors in monogamous long-term committed relationships and to allow congregations to make such determinations.

That majority sees this vote as a symptom of a larger issue within the ELCA. The ELCA is moving away from scripture as "the only rule and norm for faith and life."

### **Council Recommendations**

We believe as a council that our most faithful option at this time is to stand in the historic biblical and doctrinal faith of the Lutheran church. The faith and teachings of Emmanuel Lutheran Church have not changed.

While we await further actions by the ELCA, the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod, and other Lutheran bodies around the country, we are recommending a path of patience as we work together to determine what are our most faithful and effective options for mission and ministry beyond our congregation and around the world.

We encourage positive communication and dialog with council to clarify these issues. We also discourage the dissemination of misinformation.