



EASTERN SYNOD
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

Pastoral Consideration
Regarding the Provision of Same-Gender Marriages or Blessings

The purpose of these guidelines is to assist congregations and pastors in the process of implementation of the policy regarding same-gender marriage.

1. **Parish pastors** receiving requests to marry same-gender couples should be mindful of the consequences within the context to which they have been called. Consequently, pastors are advised not to implement this policy without consultation and support of the decision making body of the congregation.
2. **Congregations** choosing to proceed with the implementation of this policy are encouraged to do so by official action, either at church council or a congregational meeting.
3. In order to protect **Couples** who may be requesting marriage, it is important to assure that the individuals involved are not caught in the middle of a congregational dispute. Consequently, the decision to proceed with the implementation of this ministry should be made (a) before consenting to any such requests and (b) independent of any specific request.
4. As **pastors and congregations** discern the possible implementation of this ministry, discussions should be undertaken with sensitivity and respect for divergent points of view, so as not to undermine the common ministry of the congregation.
5. If a **pastor or congregation** cannot, in good conscience, conduct same-gender weddings, it is pastor's responsibility to assist those same-gender couples who ask this service to find another setting where they can be served.

These guidelines are advisory in nature.

These guidelines will be updated as relevant ELCIC and Eastern Synod policies, and other documents, are updated and brought into compliance with this action.

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