

## WA leaders call ELCA sexuality task force report misleading

by **Betsy Carlson, Editor**

Leaders of the WordAlone Network (WA) in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) said Jan. 13 that a task force majority report on ordaining people in same-sex relationships or blessing such relationships was an attempt to hoodwink "the people in the pews" into believing its recommendations won't bring change to ELCA practices.

"While the ELCA Sexuality Task Force may say it isn't suggesting change in the ELCA standards for ordination, the recommendations in its report will bring about *de facto* change because they suggest that the standards not be enforced," said Pastor Jaynan Clark Eglund, WordAlone president, Spokane, Wash. WordAlone is a reform and renewal movement in the ELCA that is working to keep the denomination faithful to the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions.

WordAlone director Pastor Mark Chavez said, "Looks like a duck, waddles like a duck, quacks like a duck, must be a duck. How stupid do they think we are?" Other WordAlone leaders and pastors have called the report, released by the ELCA, "disingenuous" and "duplicitous."

A dissenting report from some members of the task force, on the other hand, calls for affirming and upholding present policy and practices and for disciplining, "with all humility" and guided by Christian charity, those who reject the standards.

Current requirements are that pastors and other commissioned or consecrated ministry workers, who are homosexuals, must remain celibate. The denomination has no formal rule on blessing same-sex relationships, although in 1993 its Conference of Bishops voted against creating any such ceremony.

Chavez said WordAlone thanks the task force for reporting statistics on responses to its earlier published study materials. He said he regretted that the committee chose not to answer the basic question about homosexuality, "Are homosexual sexual practices sinful?"

The majority of respondents to the task force opposed ordaining or commissioning practicing homosexuals as ministers or blessing same-sex relationships.

The task force said it was recommending that the church not become any more divided than it is (Continued on page 10)

## Redefining marriage liturgically

by Mark Chavez, Director

Judges are not alone in redefining marriage. The marriage service from the Renewing Worship project of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) opens the door to redefine marriage liturgically.

No matter what the 2005 ELCA Church-wide Assembly decides about ordaining non-celibate homosexuals and blessing same sex unions, the assembly could redefine marriage liturgically. If the assembly approves publication of a new hymnal with the marriage rite as presently proffered, the door will be wide open for blessing and "marrying" homosexual couples.

The proposed marriage rite may be downloaded at: [www.renewingworship.org/resources/life\\_passages/download.html](http://www.renewingworship.org/resources/life_passages/download.html)

The possible redefinition of marriage to include "couples" other than a man and a woman is easily seen by first comparing the proposed rite with the marriage services in our previous hymnals, Service Book and Hymnal (SBH) and Lutheran Book of Worship (LBW). The SBH marriage service, in both the rubrics (the fine print rules for conduct of a liturgical service) and the liturgy, consistently refers to the people getting married as either "man and woman," "hus-

band and wife," or "man and wife." The rubrics and the liturgy for the LBW marriage service refer to the people getting married as the "bride and groom" or "husband and wife."

The introduction to the proposed rite mentions the people to be married only as "those to be married" or "the couple." Not once does the introduction specify that the rite is for marrying a man and a woman. The rubrics of the new rite use only "the couple" to refer to the people getting married. Not once do the rubrics specify that the couple is a man and a woman.

There is gender specificity within the proposed liturgy using "husband and wife" in places, but the Supplemental Materials appended to the service are introduced with this rubric: "The following texts may be used as alternatives or supplements to those included in the rite."

Here are samples of the supplemental texts. Alternative introduction D makes no mention of "marriage" and begins, "Beloved people of God, we have come together in the presence of God to witness and bless the covenant of love and fidelity *name* and *name* are to make with each other. The union of two persons in heart, body, and mind is intended by God for their mutual joy . . ."

Alternative declaration of intention C by "the couple" makes no mention of the intention to marry as husband and wife and begins, "*Name*, living in the promise of God, joined to Christ in your baptism, will you give yourself to *name* in love and faithfulness?"

Alternative declaration of intention B by "the assembly" makes no mention of supporting a husband and wife, and concludes, ". . . to honor the bonds of their covenant, and to affirm the (Continued on page 10)

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## Adiaphora and Luther's reform of the Mass

by Pastor Jim Johnson  
St. Luke Lutheran Church  
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*(Editor's note: This article is a synopsis of a paper that Pastor Johnson wrote for the Pastor-Theologian Program, Center of Theological Inquiry, Princeton, N.J., in June 2003. The original paper, "Adiaphora and Worship," is available at: [www.wordalone.org/resources/adiaphora.htm](http://www.wordalone.org/resources/adiaphora.htm))*

Many Christian denominations today, including the Lutheran church, have experienced rifts over the form and feel of worship. Little attention is given to the difference between what is necessary for worship and what is optional in worship. While the litmus test for determining such things may vary among denominations, Lutherans would do well to observe Luther's reform of the Mass as we make some interpretive assertions for discerning how to navigate through the church's current "worship wars."

Luther was faced with opposing views and practices of worship between the liturgical legalists, whom he called the Romanists, and the Enthusiasts who were minimalists—often throwing the baby (the Gospel) out with the bath water (the liturgy). Luther wrote against the Romanists' treatment of the liturgy and the human traditions they practiced in worship as sacrosanct. He particularly took issue with the sacrificial language used in the Mass—turning the sacrament into a human performance and work rather than Christ's salvific work for us. On the other hand, Luther wrote against the Enthusiasts' disdain for the tradition and heritage of Christian worship, desiring instead only novelty. When Luther finally offered a reform to the Mass, his litmus test for discerning what was essential and what was negotiable for worship was the doctrine of justification by faith. His main concern was how worship served the proclamation of the Gospel, the witness to

faith and the justification of the ungodly, the direction of the service being from God to humankind.

What was critical to Luther was distinguishing between that which was essential to the proclamation of the Gospel and the salvation of the soul, and that which was non-essential, and might become a distraction or distortion of God's justifying Word. For Luther, what is not justification by faith is adiaphora (neither commanded nor forbidden); and if the language or performance of the Mass is in conflict with this foundational presupposition then it must submit and be considered as subordinate, thus subject to reformation.

It was not so much that Luther rejected such things as pageantry and human traditions that have been added in worship, nor was he opposed to readings and singing in worship, but if that which was said, sung or performed in worship was in conflict with God's justifying Word, then it must be reformed or removed. One thing is apparent: for Luther, the primacy of the Word must be central to any form of Christian worship—that "Word" being the articulation of justification by faith in Jesus Christ.

Calvinists, Anabaptists, Zwinglians and others *may* have appealed to the Word of God as the principal element to worship, but in Luther's view, Rome did not. For Rome, the principal element was tradition—the performance of the Mass as a sacrifice to God, based on human additions to the worship service. And what differentiated Luther from other reform movements that may have appealed to the Word of God as the principal element in worship was Luther's insistence on that "Word" being God's declaration of justification to the ungodly.

What is negotiable in worship—and why?  
Are negotiables (Continued on page 10)

## What does it mean to 'bless' things?

by Pastor Steven E. King

Holy Cross Lutheran Church  
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As a parish pastor, I've often been asked to "give a blessing"—in homes, at wedding receptions, in hospital rooms, as well as at the altar rail. But what does it mean to "bless"? How is the act of pronouncing a blessing to be understood in a biblical manner?

Questions such as these are raised not only by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's (ELCA) Sexuality Study, which is considering the blessing of homosexual unions, but also the current Renewing Worship project. The worship project has proposed several new instances of blessing as a liturgical action, such as the blessing of rings at weddings and blessing the water in baptism. In this discussion, the example of Scripture is quite helpful in defining the concept of a spoken blessing.

Of the hundreds of uses of the word "bless" throughout the Old and New Testaments (forms of the Hebrew *berek* and the Greek *eulogo*), the verbal form is the one most applicable to use in liturgies. Scripture offers many examples of spoken blessings, often in the form of actual quotations on the lips of God or human beings. These examples show a consistency in the theme and content of biblical blessings, as words that convey the hope of generative production and reproduction.

For example, the very first words of blessing found in the Scriptures occur in the midst of creation, when God says to the fish and birds in Genesis 1:22, and later to human beings in Genesis 1:28, "be fruitful and multiply." Similarly throughout the Bible, the concept of blessing is invariably tied to fertility and multiplication—especially in human beings and other living things.

Whether it be the fruitful increase of children, flocks, herds, crops or springs of water, "blessing" in Scripture always carries with it the idea of quantitative increase.

It is significant to note that in the Scriptures inanimate objects are not blessed, either by God or by human beings. There are no examples of blessings being spoken to "dead" things, such as rocks, furniture, utensils, jewelry, and so on—since these things are incapable of reproducing. Even food and water are blessed only indirectly, in the context of God providing for people's needs in plentiful abundance, but not as objects in and of themselves. While one might point to the Words of Institution, where Jesus "took the bread, and after blessing, he broke it..." (Matt. 26:26), it is important to remember that the object of the blessing here is not the bread, but God himself, being thanked for providing the meal ("blessed are you, O Lord our God, who brings forth bread from the earth").

Blessing is never used in Scripture as the means of investing an object with sacramental or divine power, nor is it anywhere described in a manner comparable to the concept of "enchanted" an item with magic spells. Biblical blessings always invoke God's providence in bringing about the natural fruition and reproduction of procreant resources.

Knowing the way blessings were actually used in the Scriptures has important implications for how we use the word. Perhaps the best guide for determining what to bless or what not to bless, would be to ask the question: Would the phrase "be fruitful and multiply" make sense in this case? If not, then to speak a "blessing" would most likely not be appropriate in such a case under the precedent of Scripture.

## Theological board comments on 'Christian, Evangelical Worship'



*(Editor's note: This statement was written and is presented for use by the Theological Advisory Board of the WordAlone Network. This is only part of the document. The first part, which discusses the evangelical definition of worship and also the proclamation of the gospel and response to it was published in the November-December 2004 issue of Network News. They both can be useful now in reviewing proposed new worship materials of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America that are to be considered at next summer's churchwide assembly. The entire document can be read at [www.wordalone.org/resources/worship/christian\\_evangelical\\_worship.htm](http://www.wordalone.org/resources/worship/christian_evangelical_worship.htm))*

### 4. Implications for Worship and Church Practices

#### 4.1 Christian worship as a dialog

##### 4.1.1 Priority of God's Word and the response

Because Christian worship is the particular dialog between God who speaks and the community of believers who responds, any form of worship that does not embody the priority of God's Word and the response of the community must be reformed. For example, reform is necessary when worship services dissolve the Word of God into the community's response. Such dissolution occurs when the service is performed entirely or primarily as a sacrifice, thanksgiving, celebration or action of the community directed toward God. Reform is also necessary when Word and sacrament are treated in a manner that suppresses the response of the congregation.

##### 4.1.2 Freedom regarding liturgical uses or ceremonies

Liturgical practices and ceremonies in the church are numerous. If they conform to the true, dialogical character of worship, they are matters of freedom (adiaphora). They must all be examined as to whether they conform to the sent-down-to-earth

gift of our crucified and risen Lord and make possible the response of the community to him. "May-bes" in worship ought not to be converted into "must-bes." The community is always at liberty to alter its practices of worship but only as long as these meet the criterion of justification by faith alone, apart from works of the law. Hence, when changes in worship practice take place, pastoral advice dictates that the weak and inexperienced in the community not be overlooked or neglected for the sake of theological innovations that appear to some as doctrinally, ecumenically or practically advantageous.

##### 4.1.3 The danger of devising universal orders and practices

As the community of believers considers worship practices, appeals to tradition can be important. Practices should not be introduced, however, merely because they reflect a "wider ecumenical heritage of the liturgy" or a "consensus of the first five centuries" or a "practice of the early church." Any practice of worship allegedly ordained by God or given by Christian tradition must be measured against the chief article of justification by faith alone. As Lutherans confess, "it is not necessary for the true unity of (Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5) the Christian church that uniform ceremonies, instituted by human beings, be observed everywhere" (Augsburg Confession, 7). Luther's warning remains valid today: "those who devise and ordain universal customs and orders get so wrapped up in them that they make them into dictatorial laws opposed to the freedom of faith" (Martin Luther, "Exhortation to the Livonians," in Luther's Works, 53:46).

#### 4.2 Public worship means preaching

"When God's Word is not preached, one had better neither sing nor read or even come together" (Martin Luther, "Concerning the Order of Public Worship," in Luther's Works, 53:11). Preaching is not merely preparatory to the Lord's Supper but is itself sacramental. In it, God in his own Word addresses the community of believers in human words. No Christian preaching exists except where it is grounded in the Biblical text. Preaching is not mere commentary on the text but address to particular people in need of God's Word. Nor does Christian preaching exist where law and gospel are not proclaimed or not properly distinguished. Such proper distinction is likewise bound to the Biblical text. It is only in preaching so described that Christ's promise of "he who hears you hears me" (Luke 10:16) bears fruit.

#### 4.3 Baptism

4.3.1 Baptism is the Word of God in water bestowing upon us once and for all the forgiveness of sins and new life in Christ. To recognize this is to recognize both how we are justified in baptism and what role the water plays in it. We are justified in baptism neither through personal confession alone nor by the simple performance of the rite (*ex opere operato*), nor is it effective

only by personal confession. What justifies is baptismal grace received in faith. Such justification by grace through faith, however, shows that no understanding or use of baptism can ever be proper that would make the water the central element. Central to baptism is God's promise. Only because it is connected to the Word does the water have a role to play. The water mediates no special power because of its naturalness and it is not to be blessed in any special way.

4.3.2 Christian faith clings only to the benefits of Christ bestowed on us in baptism. It never leaves them behind or advances beyond them. Baptism, therefore, is not simply a rite of initiation but is the lifelong heart of Christian existence. In baptism, God makes a trustworthy promise to us and is faithful to this promise. Therefore baptism can and need never be repeated even if the baptized person is unfaithful to it. This is also why secondary practices, if they detract from the promise of God's Word in the water of baptism, are to be rejected. This holds for practices such as the ritual of laying on of hands, anointing with oil, clothing with a new garment, or the presentation of a candle and so on. If these be regarded as essential to baptism, they cease to be what they are, matters of indifference (*adiaphora*).

#### 4.4 Lord's Supper

4.4.1 The Lord's Supper is the Word of God in bread and wine and gives to us Christ's own body and blood in these elements. The host always remains our Lord Jesus Christ, who bestows upon us, his betrayers, "the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation" (Small Catechism).

4.4.2 The Pauline name of "Lord's Supper" declares who the host and giver is, and what the central benefit of the sacra-

ment is. It is thus to be preferred to the later term of "eucharist." The latter is derived from the Greek verb meaning "to thank," which implies that the main action that takes place is what the community does, namely, offer up thanks to God. Christ's gift is what matters, not our thanksgiving, celebration or sacrifice.

4.4.3 In the Lord's Supper the power consists in Christ's Word. Apart from the Word, bread and wine have no power. On the contrary, the sacrament depends on Christ's promise, which creates the faith that receives it. Faith, then, does not create the promise but receives it. Christ's words of institution ("...given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins...") constitute proclamation to the communicants. No eucharistic prayer that converts Christ's words into a prayer of ours to God should be used. Liturgical rites and language ought not detract from either the centrality or the proclamatory character of Christ's words. If they do so, the words of institution cease to be a proclamation of the present Christ and become no more than a quotation of Scripture.

4.4.4 Prayers before and after the words of institution should be used with great care. Prayers recalling God's mighty acts for his people (*anamnesis*) can be an appropriate response to God's Word. The Lord's Supper is not initiated, however, through any prayer of ours that serves as a reminder to God of his mighty acts. Christ's command "Do this in remembrance of me," means that the elements of bread and wine are distributed in conjunction with Christ's own promise to give himself in these elements for our salvation. Christ's command is not fulfilled by any eucharistic prayer or symbolic practices such as that of breaking the bread while the words of institution are being spoken (fraction of the

bread). Our act of remembering Christ does not cause him to be present in the Supper nor to do his work of forgiving sins.

4.4.5 It is in our response to God's Word that our sacrifice of praise and of self (Romans 12) has its proper place. Such placement precludes our understanding the Lord's Supper either as a sacrifice that we offer to God or as something of ours that is conjoined to Christ's sacrifice. In itself, the language of sacrifice in the liturgy or in our interpretation of the Lord's Supper tempts us to think of the Supper not as the gift of God that comes down to us but as our upward movement toward God.

4.4.6 Christ is present in the Lord's Supper because this is his promise. No human initiative or action of the church can cause him to be present. In the Supper, the present Christ truly forgives sins. The Lord's Supper is neither a repetition, nor a representation, nor a completion of Christ's sacrifice on Calvary.

4.4.7 Since the Lord Christ instituted his Supper with the elements of bread and wine the latter are to be distributed in both kinds. We eat and drink these elements as Christ commanded us. The pastor does not self-commune but receives the elements in like manner as the other communicants. Because Christ has given us these elements to eat and drink, they are not to be reserved so as to be adored. And because promise and distribution are indissolubly linked, the elements are also not to be taken from the altar and, apart from speaking the words of institution, distributed to persons at a later time.

4.4.8 Who is the person who in the Lord's Supper receives "such power and benefit" as forgiveness of sins, life and salvation? "It is the one who believes what the words say and what they" (Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7) give," for they strengthen and nourish the new creature in this old world as "a daily food and sustenance" (Large Catechism, "The Sacrament of the Altar," par. 33, 23-4). The specific words are also said to each communicant, "The body of Christ given for you. The blood of Christ shed for you," so as to stress that the promise embodied in the Lord's Supper is given to each one who eats and drinks.

4.4.9 To receive the Lord's Supper in faith and at the same time to reject baptism is not possible. Baptism is the permanent basis of Christian life. Like preaching and absolution, the Lord's Supper is continual nourishment for Christian life. Whereas the words, "as often as you do it," mean that no one is compelled to partake of the Supper, they do "imply that we should do it frequently" (Large Catechism, "The Sacrament of the Altar," par. 47). Still, the frequency with which one partakes of the Lord's Supper is a matter of freedom, since the Lord's Supper is not relegated in the church year to specific times.

#### 4.5 Absolution

4.5.1 The absolution is God's Word in a human voice that addresses the sinner in a particular way whereby the Triune God forgives our sins. Sinners are therefore freed to repent, confess their sins, and to live a new life in Christ's forgiving grace. The Christian life is the daily return to baptism wherein the gift of forgiveness and new life is bestowed.

4.5.2 In absolution God looses and absolves us from our sins. Hence, absolution is sacramental in the same sense as preaching, baptism and the Lord's Supper. The rite of absolution is to be used freely and frequently so as to strengthen and com-

fort troubled consciences. Absolution is always "the surpassingly grand and noble thing that makes confession so wonderful and comforting" (Large Catechism, "A Brief Exhortation to Confession," par.16).

4.5.3 Repentance does not impel God to absolve us of our sins. Those who know themselves to be sinful also recognize their need to confess their sins and to hear the words of absolution. In baptism, God has placed the words of absolution in the mouths of the members of his Christian community and commanded them to absolve one another of their sins (Large Catechism, "A Brief Exhortation to Confession," par. 14). The result is that all Christians need to receive absolution. All, whether ordained or not, are able and, where necessary, obliged to speak to one another the words of absolution.

#### 4.6 Hymnody

Hymns used in worship should be chosen with care. They should express the richness of the Lutheran hymn tradition by proclaiming God's Word, teaching the mighty acts of God among us, and allowing the faithful to respond to the Word. Modern "praise" hymns focus only on one aspect of the response to God's Word. If "praise" hymns are used exclusively, preaching and teaching the great works of God in the past, present and future are neglected. In our time, numerous new melodies and lyrics, some from various cultures, have been added. Hymns should be singable for everyone; neither proclamation nor praise is aided when hymns are difficult to sing. Those who choose hymns should be conscious of the rich hymnic heritage of the Lutheran church and should not neglect the old merely for the sake of the new—even as hymnody's creative process continues.

#### 4.7 Other Practices

4.7.1 *Practices without a particular promise*  
God has attached his promise of grace to the preached word and to the words of absolution, baptism, and Lord's Supper. To no other practice in the church has he attached this promise. For example, no promise of grace is attached to the laying on of hands, the anointing with oil, the marking with the sign of the cross, the sprinkling of the congregation with water (asperges), the calling of the Spirit down upon the baptismal water or upon the bread and wine (epiclesis), the blessing of the water, the kissing of the Bible, or to processions, banners, garments, liturgical dance and so forth.

##### 4.7.2 *The collection of gifts*

Associated with our responses of prayer, praise and thanksgiving is the collection of gifts for the church and for the poor. The location and means for such collections ought not to be confused with the Lord's Supper. Processions in which the bread and wine are offered to God before consecration may mislead us into thinking that what is central in the Lord's supper is our gifts to God instead of Christ's gifts to us.

#### 4.8 Worship Space

4.8.1 Because no service of worship exists without the preaching of God's Word, worship space must allow for all to hear the preacher clearly.

4.8.2 In the administration of the Lord's Supper, the position of the altar in the sanctuary is not the central matter. Nevertheless, the position and use of the altar ought not to prevent the worshipers from comprehending the chief benefit of the Lord's Supper. This benefit is proffered in Christ's promise, "...Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins..." So that the worshipers hear the

promise, the pastor utters it while facing the congregation and, if possible, standing behind the altar.

4.8.3 The use of terminology is also important. A too frequent use of the word "table" may lead some worshipers to construe the Lord's Supper merely as a fellowship meal. A too frequent use of the word "altar" runs the risk of picturing the Lord's Supper as a sacrifice that worshipers make to God.

4.8.4 In the rite of baptism, neither the position of the font nor the amount or type of water is essential. Should the baptismal font, however, be located at the entrance of the worship space, misconceptions may result. Worshipers may infer that baptism marks the beginning of a Christian journey to holiness or entrance into a mystery.

#### Conclusion

Because these fundamental Lutheran insights facilitate an evaluation of current or proposed worship practices, they should be applied in conjunction with Luther's prudent counsel: "And this is the sum of the matter: Let everything be done so that the Word may have free course instead of the prattling and rattling that have been the rule up to now. We can spare everything except the Word. Again, we profit by nothing as much as by the Word. For the whole scripture shows that the Word should have free course among Christians. And in Luke 10:42, Christ himself says, 'One thing is needful,' i.e., that Mary sit at the feet of Christ and hear his Word daily. This is the best part to choose and it shall not be taken away forever. It is an eternal Word. Everything else must pass away, no matter how much care and trouble it may give Martha. God help us achieve this. Amen." ("Concerning the Order of Public Worship, 1523," in Luther's Works, 53:14).

## Looking for a few good people

This spring the WordAlone Network (WA) will be meeting in its annual convention, and among our important duties we will be electing new members to the WA Board of Directors. The nominating committee would like to get your comments and suggestions for new board member nominees. We are looking for good confessing Lutheran women and men who can help direct this organization in the next years, and would like to hear from you about possible candidates. We always need people with a wide range of talents and capabilities; we especially need to hear from you if you know of capable laypeople and those with fundraising and development experience. You can send suggestions to the WordAlone office, or to the chair of the nominating committee, Mark Granquist (mgranqui@gac.edu).

### WA leaders call report misleading

*(Continued from page 1)*

already over the issues concerning homosexuality and thought that dealing with concerns through pastoral care rather than legislative action or discipline would hold the church together while it continues to talk about it. (The task force report is available at: [www.elca.org/faithfuljourney/tfreport](http://www.elca.org/faithfuljourney/tfreport))

### Adiaphora and Luther's reform

*(Continued from page 3)*

one thing for Lutherans, another for Romanists, another for Calvinists and another for Anabaptists? Or is there something necessary and essential for the Christian church, and its witness to the Gospel? Are there some things we're united in understanding as essential and non-negotiable? Can Luther be of help in our struggles over worship today?

**"your word is truth"**

### The Authority of Scripture

#### WordAlone Network Annual Convention

April 17-19

St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, Mahtomedi, Minn.

**Keynote Presenters:** Hans Hillerbrand, Craig Koester, Thomas Sheehan, Vitor Westhelle

**Workshops:** WordAlone's new hymnal, introduction to WordAlone, new association of churches, training for assemblies and other timely topics

Look for registration materials in the mail or contact the WA office.

### Redefining marriage liturgically

*(Continued from page 2)*

love of God reflected in their lives?"

Alternative vow C does not mention giving oneself as husband or wife, but instead begins, "I, name, give myself to you, name."

None of the four alternative acclamations that could be used after the vows include the specificity of the traditional acclamation—"by their promises before God and in the presence of this assembly, have bound themselves to one another as husband and wife. Those whom God has joined together let no one put asunder." All four could be used in the marriage of any kind of couple. The same pattern occurs in the worship project's alternative nuptial blessings and prayers.

The proposed rite could easily be used not only to bless a same-sex union, but also, as the rite now stands, "marry" them. The rite is titled "Marriage" and is consistently referred to as "the marriage liturgy."

Apparently judges are not the only ones who are eager to redefine marriage.

## Lutheran Clergy Connect

Lutheran Clergy Connect is one way for congregations seeking a pastor to connect with potential candidates who believe that Christ alone is sufficient for the unity of the Church and that the Word of God is the authority for the Church. Below are the most recent listings. A full list, which includes 16 additional listings, is posted on the WordAlone website. ([www.wordalone.org](http://www.wordalone.org)).

If you would like your congregation listed on Clergy Connect, please mail or fax your request on church letterhead, signed by an officer or call committee chair, to WordAlone Network, 2299 Palmer Dr. Suite 220, New Brighton, MN 55112 Fax: 651-633-4260. (Please notify us when the position's been filled.)

Give the following information:  
 Pastoral position  
 Congregation's name, city, & state (& website address if applicable)  
 Contact person  
 Phone number  
 E-mail address

Calls are listed starting with the most recently received.

Rock Valle Lutheran Church  
 Echo, MN

Contact: Larry Schueler  
 Congregation President  
 507-925-4473

*A full-time pastor to serve a two-point parish who supports the 10 Affirmations associated with WordAlone.*

Grace Lutheran Church  
 Bountiful, Utah

Contact: Melinda Williams  
 c/o Grace Lutheran Church  
 835 N. Main  
 Bountiful, Utah 84010  
 801-295-2251, ext 131  
 mwilliams@davisclipper.com

*A bi-vocational or full-time pastor who is open to the leading of the Spirit, & who can offer Bible-based messages, leading to transformed lives, to serve a small, but committed group of Christians, looking to grow, both spiritually & numerically.*

Elk Horn Lutheran Church  
 Elk Horn, IA

Contact: Doug Smith, Call Chairman  
 714-764-8642

*committee@elkhornlutheran.org  
 A full-time Pastor for Word & Sacrament minister who is committed to the Augsburg Confession (word alone, grace alone, faith alone). For a complete description of this position please call or email the Call Chairman. Our congregation is a church of the newly formed Augsburg Lutheran Churches (ALC) & Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC). All inquiries will be handled with confidentiality.*

Mount Olive Lutheran Church  
 Lake Havasu City, AZ

Contact: Ted Harris  
 Call Committee Chairman  
 928-855-3079 (w)

*3 Positions: Lead Pastor, an Associate Pastor & a Youth & Family Director*

*\*A full-time Lead Pastor, ELCA, who is passionate, high-energy & can deliver bible based messages that lead to transformed lives, a visionary leader with a heart for prayer, worship, discipleship & reaching out to community. Full range of ministry to be shared with an as-*

*sociate pastor with focus on small groups & a director of youth & family ministry.*

*\*A full-time Associate Pastor who will provide partnership & support for the work of the Lead Pastor & provide leadership & direction for small group ministries as well as supervision for the director of youth & family programs.*

*\*A full-time Director of Youth & Family Ministry to ensure the education for Youth that will lead them to develop in Christlike maturity, equipping them for ministry in the church & the world.*

Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church  
 Des Moines, IA

Contact: David E. Neve  
 Call Committee Chairman  
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 515-669-4269 (c)  
 neve51@mchsi.com  
 Senior Pastor

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church  
 Sandy, UT

Contact: Sue Wager  
 1068 W. Ridgeway Cove  
 So. Jordan, UT 84095  
 801-253-8626

The congregation is LCMC only.  
 Full-time associate pastor