



LUTHERAN LESBIAN & GAY MINISTRIES

## Statement on the Bradley Schmeling Decision

February 11, 2007

### **Pastor Schmeling & St. John's Lutheran Church a blessing**

Lutheran Lesbian & Gay Ministries (LLGM) gives thanks for Rev. Bradley Schmeling and St. John's Lutheran Church and their faithful witness during the recent ecclesiastical trial that resulted in his pending removal from the clergy roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. LLGM further affirms and celebrates Bradley's relationship with his partner, Rev. Darin Easler.

LLGM will continue to offer support for the vibrant ministry at St. John's Lutheran Church under Rev. Schmeling's leadership. The ELCA discipline committee has come to conclude what LLGM has stated since the inception of the policy banning pastors in same sex relationships from ministry: this policy of discrimination is wrong and must change. The panel's observance of the tension between the ELCA policy and the gospel has been identified and stated by many other institutional arms of the ELCA since 1989. In each case, policy has trumped the gospel.

LLGM continues to act on its conviction that people of all sexual orientations and gender identities called to ministry in the Lutheran church must be held to consistent standards. LLGM works with the Extraordinary Candidacy Project to ensure a place for Lutheran pastors called to ministry but denied their call because of their sexual orientation or gender identification.

While the decision of the Disciplinary Hearing Committee contains much to commend, the true action and justice will come when the members and leaders of the ELCA move to follow their suggestion and truly create change.

***Lutheran Lesbian & Gay Ministries, founded in 1989, is a national non-profit organization that empowers openly identified sexual minority people called to God's mission of ministry and witness.***

Lutheran Lesbian & Gay Ministries

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