

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT  
THE CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY OF 2009

***If our ELCA allows for the recognition of same-sex relationships does that mean that our congregation must do the same?***

**No.** The mission of each congregation is led by the decisions of your official meetings of the congregation, your church council, lay leaders (both called and volunteer) and your pastor(s). If the mission of your congregation would not be served by allowing for the recognition of same-sex relationships you will not be forced to do so. The decision belongs to the local congregation.

***If our ELCA allows for persons in same-sex relationships to receive ordination does that mean our congregation will be forced to do the same?***

**No.** As above, the congregation holds the right by current practice, historical precedent and by constitution to offer a call to a pastor or other rostered leader. If the mission of your congregation would not be served by allowing a person in a same-sex relationship to serve as your pastor or rostered leader than you will not be forced to call such a person. The decision belongs to the local congregation.

***If our congregation does not go along with the actions of our 2009 Churchwide Assembly will we be punished in any way or 'looked down upon' for doing so?***

**No.** Our 2009 Churchwide Assembly also voted clearly to safeguard the differences of opinion we have in this matter. We have chosen to allow for these changes. We have not chosen to make these changes across the church. The decision for mission that each congregation makes in this matter will be respected and honored.

***What if our pastor(key lay leader) thinks one way and we think another way? What's the best way to work that through?***

It is best for pastors, lay leaders and congregations to set mission plans together. It is rarely wise, on any issue, for the pastor/lay leaders and the congregation to head off in totally different directions. Wise conversations, guided by God's Holy Spirit can lead you and your leaders to a statement of mission that can serve as a guide for how you will deal with this and all other matters of ministry that you face together in Christ.

***So, if we do not appreciate these changes we do not have to make them a part of our ministry? Likewise, if we do appreciate these changes we can make them a part of our ministry?***

**Yes and Yes.** Your sisters and brothers across our ELCA are partners in mission and trust the mission field you tend to your faithful and Spirit-led discipleship. The decisions that help you proclaim the name of Jesus best will be respected and expected along the way.