


VICTORY

for LGBT couples and their families!



The Supreme Court rules the
Fourteenth Amendment requires a
state to license a marriage between
two people of the same gender.

RECONCILINGWORKS 
LUTHERANS FOR FULL PARTICIPATION

ReconcilingWorks: Lutherans for Full Participation responds with joy to today's Supreme Court decision on the freedom to marry.

ReconcilingWorks applauds the court's decision to recognize the fundamental right for all people to have equal access to marriage. For the first time, the U.S. government, working through the Supreme Court, has recognized categorically committed, loving relationships of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities are equal and should have equal protection under the law in all states and the District of Columbia.

Obergefell v. Hodges, as the case is known, represents a milestone on the road to fuller participation of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities in society. Writing for the majority of the

Supreme Court, Justice Kennedy said "[T]he Nation's traditions make clear that marriage is a keystone of the Nation's social order. . . . There is no difference between same- and opposite-sex couples with respect to this principle, yet same-sex couples are denied the constellation of benefits that the States have linked to marriage and are consigned to an instability many opposite-sex couples would find intolerable. It is demeaning to lock same-sex couples out of a central institution of the Nation's society, for they too may aspire to the transcendent purposes of marriage."

We believe the court's ruling is a blessing to society and the church. Recognizing the freedom to marry for all is good for the flourishing for people and families. Marriage is a way for committed couples who choose to exchange lifelong promises of mutual responsibility to care for and support each other, through the peaks and valleys of life, asking friends, family, and, in many cases, their faith communities, to support them and hold them accountable. Marriage also helps provide for legal and social structures in which these relationships are lived out.

For Lutherans, marriage and family life is a vocation, one of the ways God does God's work in us and through us for the sake of the world.

"Today is a day for the history books, and has left my heart filled with indescribable joy! However, this is not where the story and history of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer liberation and equity ends," said Aubrey Thonvold, Executive Director of ReconcilingWorks. "Today marks a tremendous milestone on the journey of justice. We give thanks to all those would have courageously supported and worked for the freedom to marry in our country. With a full heart, I give thanks for this day and fix my eyes on tomorrow knowing LGBTQ history is still being written."



The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has yet to endorse the freedom to marry for LGBT couples, although its 2009 social statement Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust (2009) has declared support for "legislation and policies to protect civil rights" for all people and has committed to "attend to the need for equal protection, equal opportunities, and equal responsibilities under the law" for all people, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people and their families.

The ELCA has allowed marriages for LGBT couples in ELCA congregations in states where legal since 2009, but the denomination does not provide a liturgical resource for marriage ceremonies that are inclusive of LGBT couples.

ReconcilingWorks celebrates today's court decision as a great step forward. **However, our organization recognizes the freedom to marry will not be enough to dismantle injustices based on sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, race, ethnicity, and other social categories.**

Together striving side by side people of faith must continue to courageously work in the church and society for justice and equity for LGBT people and families. For example: recently, in Indiana, Louisiana, and North Carolina, legal developments have allowed for egregious discrimination against LGBT people, essentially empowering individuals, business, and state agencies to claim that any number of laws and regulations do not apply to them, as long as they appeal to a "sincerely held religious belief."

Grave injustices remain in public housing, health care, voting rights, immigration, the prison system, and elsewhere. Violence against LGBT people, especially transgender people and LGBT people of color, happens every day.

We look forward to our continued partnership in Christ's ministry of reconciliation, proclaiming good news to the poor, release to the captives, and freedom for the oppressed (Luke 4:18).



My Lutheran Faith Community **Performs LGBT Weddings**

As the nation awaits the Supreme Court's ruling on the freedom to marry for all loving committed couples, ReconcilingWorks is already getting calls about Lutheran congregations who will be providing marriages for couples affected by this ruling. To date ReconcilingWorks has tracked if a congregation provides blessing services. Now ReconcilingWorks will also start tracking if a congregation provides marriages for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) couples. Regardless of your faith community's Reconciling in Christ (RIC) status, if you will be providing marriage services, please **fill out this form** so ReconcilingWorks staff can provide up-to-date and accurate information for LGBT couples who are inquiring. RIC setting info will be added to the setting's public profile. Non-RIC congregations info will be held in house and used only by ReconcilingWorks.

Let us know by using this

form: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1e01Yi3fSSICJE5YbNAXjliUYsdm9vEDnNXJvuOYIz8s/viewform>

See if your RIC congregation is listed as a place where LGBT weddings are performed at <http://www.reconcilingworks.org/RIClist> a difference.