

SCOTUS Ruling Talking Points for LCMS Pastors

CHURCH

- Christians know that everyone deserves acceptance, no matter what, and that Christ takes all our sins, inclinations and struggles with Him to the cross. Through Christ's death on the cross, we have salvation.
- We are all sinners; we repent, and we hold fast to our biblical moral ideals and our thankfulness for Christ's saving atonement for our sins.
- Rather than abandon the Gospel, we openly share the joy of the Gospel in loving fellowship with one another, so that together, we are saved by grace through faith in Christ.
- The church is singularly focused on saving lives through the proclamation of the Gospel. We will continue to show love and mercy to all those harmed by the dissolution of God's ordering of marriage and family.
- Most importantly, the church will speak of the One who came for sinners — all sinners — and of the One who showed His love for us by dying for us.
- The Church is enduring and eternal. We speak Christ's forgiveness and peace to men and women struggling with same-sex attraction and heterosexual attraction alike, in and out of season.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

- It is ironic that the First Amendment guarantees the "free exercise of religion," yet our society is increasingly intolerant of those who hold religious beliefs differing from popular culture.
- In a nation founded on religious liberty, we now live in a nation where religious liberty is often trumped by sexual preference litigation.

- We stand with all who defend the freedom to be faithful. America has always guarded freedom of conscience, and we in the LCMS pray, and endeavor to ensure, she always will.
- Persecution always looms where religious liberty is threatened.
- In America, religious people must be guaranteed the freedom to live peacefully according to their beliefs without fear of punishment, litigious harassment or intrusion by the government.
- America was founded on religious freedom; we in the LCMS will be watching to see if our First Amendment rights will be honored.
- As we examine the ruling further, the question is, will people of faith continue to be driven from the public square for standing up for what they believe? Or, will they continue to be accused of animus for following their religious beliefs and exercising freedom of speech as guaranteed in our Constitution?
- We care deeply about the protection of our religious freedoms and the ability of our congregations, our schools and our social service organizations to operate according to our closely held religious beliefs.

MARRIAGE

- We in the LCMS share the definition of marriage law which has existed within the cultures of the world from the beginning of time down to our present, confused times. We speak the truth in love to all. We share Christ's forgiveness with each person He sets in our path.
- Our sexuality does not define us, nor do we define our sexuality. God has blessed us with His divine gift of marriage as being between one man and one woman. This is what the LCMS has always believed and taught since its inception in 1847.
- We in the LCMS are carefully examining the church's role in marriage, that is, having our pastors act as agents of the state. No action will be taken quickly, until we first study and pray about the impact and meaning of the court's decision. We ask for your prayers that God grant us wisdom and understanding during this time.
- No matter what the court has decided, the struggle over the future of marriage will continue. Discussion about the future of marriage and laws affecting the family will continue. The LCMS is ready to engage in this discussion and calls for all Christians to uphold the sanctity of marriage within our culture.
- We should encourage, support and lift up the vocations of family—husband, wife, mother, father, son, daughter—and support marriages, families, parents and children everywhere.

Media Engagement Tips:

- **Media training/practice interviews** –Roger Drinnon in LCMS Communications, is available and pleased to provide some quick training and or coaching should you be called by the media. This can be done by phone or by email. Roger.Drinnon@lcms.org
314-996-1217.
- **EVERYTHING you say is on the record** – even casual conversation with a reporter
- Assume the question asked will not be part of the media coverage – only your answer, so your answer must be clear:
 - **Messaging** – An effective answer to a media question gives the **key message first, then whatever else is needed to satisfy the reporter:**
 - **KEY MESSAGE + REMAINING QUESTION RESPONSE = EFFECTIVE ANSWER**
- **Repetition** – Repeating a key message throughout an interview increases the chance it will make it into the coverage.
- **Bridging** – If a reporter asks a question you're not comfortable with, decline it and give a related key message:
 - **Ex:** *“What I can tell you is that we care deeply about the protection of our religious freedoms and the ability of our congregations, our schools and our social service organizations to operate according to our closely held religious beliefs.”*
- **Offer to follow up** – Offer to get back with the reporter for unanswered items. For specific data requests or other questions where an answer is not immediately available, let the reporter know that someone from Synod's Communications staff will get back with them later. Then please notify Roger.Drinnon@lcms.org
314-996-1217