



Trinity Lutheran Church †

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To the Members of the CTCR:

You have received a reply from our Pastor, Reverend Paul Harris, regarding your letter of February 15, 2007. While we fully support his response and do not believe it is possible to improve upon his point-by-point arguments, we believe it is important that you hear from us, the congregation of Trinity Lutheran, as well. This “laymen’s response” is submitted to ensure, lest there be any doubt, that the concerns raised about the current course of the Synod are shared by the entire congregation.

This response has been the subject of much discussion in our voters’ assembly, and has been reviewed and refined over the past 14 months in no less than three different, quarterly meetings. It is for this reason that so much time has passed since we received your letter, and before you heard from us. In short, we have deliberated extensively and painstakingly regarding our response.

We received your blanket response to those LCMS congregations (Trinity among them) who had penned a letter of dissent regarding the recent actions of the Synod with respect to several key doctrinal points. We read, analyzed, and considered your response in great detail. In fact, we made it the subject of a twelve week Bible study. We agonized over your response, for the issues that have been raised by Trinity and numerous other LCMS congregations strike at the very heart of what it means to be a Lutheran.

The results of our study can be summarized thus: we are thoroughly disappointed with your response.

Some among us are angry, some frustrated, some tired, but most are saddened that your response did not directly address our concerns. We had hoped for an open and frank discussion about doctrine, Holy Scripture, and the current course of the Synod. That is not what we received. In fact, several of our issues were not addressed at all. Specifically these unaddressed issues include the undisciplined practice of open communion, the encouraged use of revivalistic worship, and the removal of a pastor’s and congregation’s right to initiate formal review of pastors or other Synodical leaders. Further, for those issues that were included in your response, you did not support your position with Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, but rather by citing Synodical procedures, bylaws, and resolutions – in some cases the very procedures, bylaws, and resolutions to which we objected.

We were hoping to have you agree and reverse your course, or correct us by pointing out our errors that we might repent. Instead, we feel that we received a dissertation on the Synod's political and bureaucratic processes that was at best unhelpful and at worst condescending.

Therefore, we remain in this state of confession, and respectfully request that you respond to each of our specific areas of dissent, as outlined in our June 2005 Statement of Confession, in a point-by-point fashion with a focus on the Lutheran Confessions and the Holy Scripture. Until such time as you reverse your current position on these issues, or can show us where we are in error, we continue to dissent.

In closing, we ask that you expedite your review and consideration of our position. In our Statement of Confession, we established a three year time frame to work lovingly to call our Synod back to her former doctrine and practice. The close of that three year period is rapidly approaching and we will soon find ourselves at a crossroads. We remain hopeful that you will use your commission to reverse the Synod's current course so that we may, with a clear conscience, remain in fellowship with the Missouri Synod. We will, however, not depart from the doctrine and confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Respectfully and Prayerfully Submitted,

Trinity Lutheran Church
Austin, Texas