

## **A NOTE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE LCMS OHIO DISTRICT COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS**

I have received several inquiries from congregations about them including a statement about the sanctity of marriage in their constitutions. I consulted with Rev. Dr. John Sias, who is the Secretary of Synod and also the Secretary for the Commission on Constitution Matters (CCM). He stated that a congregation does not have to place a statement about marriage in their constitution or in their by-laws, but a congregation may consider constructing a policy statement about this matter.

Here are his words: Our congregational constitutions contain a strong statement of confessional subscription, entailing the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. Our congregations, as members of The LCMS, strongly evidence an understanding of these fundamental documents limiting marriage to "one man and one woman." And yet, I question whether as an isolated statement it needs to be elevated to the level of a constitutional provision." Thus, congregations are encouraged to establish a policy statement about this matter.

Happily, our Synod has provided some resources for such a policy statement on its web site. You can find it by going to Synod's website at [www.lcms.org](http://www.lcms.org). Click "Resources," then click "School and Administration." Click "Legal Issues," and the scroll down to "Statements." There you will find the various samples of policy statements for congregations. Discuss these statements with your voters or church councils and make any necessary changes. You don't have to submit your policy statement to our Committee. You may also include a bibliographical note that your statement came from the Synod. If you have any questions, contact me at [pihoff49@gmail.com](mailto:pihoff49@gmail.com).

Rev. Dr. Paul Hoffman  
Chairman, LCMS Ohio District Committee on Constitutional Matters