

## **Joint statement from the bishops of ELCD, 2005**

There was consensus on the following joint statement:

In October 1997 the bishops sent out a joint declaration on the possibility of an order of service regarding blessing of registered partnerships. The conclusion was that the bishops did not find it appropriate to make a new ritual in this field. On the other hand the bishops pointed out the opportunity to mark an already registered partnership with a blessing in church.

In view of the experiences of these markings from the recent years, the political messages and an on-going hard debate on the subject the bishops in unity want to denounce Christian and human condemnation of homosexuality and homosexual behaviour as they did in 1997. We still consider registered partnership as a beneficial arrangement for homosexual couples.

The bishops want to emphasize that biblical statements on homosexuality cannot be used as a condemnation, as the totality of the gospel in this case has more weight than isolated words from the Bible.

The bishops Erik Norman Svendsen, Jan Lindhardt, Soeren Lodberg Hvas, Kjeld Holm, Holger Jepsen, Kresten Drejergaard and Sofie Petersen will send out a guide to the order of service for a church blessing of registered partnerships, whereas the bishops Lise-Lotte Rebel, Niels Henrik Arendt, Karsten Nissen and Elisabeth Dons Christensen will not send out such a guide.

Bishop Hans Jacob Joensen did not participate in the discussion on this subject, since the law on registered partnership is not valid on the Faroe Islands.

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### **Guide to the order of service (blessing of registered partnership):**

#### **Collect**

Lord, our God, Heavenly Father, we thank you for the gift of life and for all who have shown us love from our childhood to this day. We pray: Give us always what we need, and daily renew our love for one another, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, One true God forever and ever. Amen.

**1. Reading:** Ps 36, 5-9 *or*

Ps 8

**2. Reading:** Joh 15, 9-10 *or*

Gal 6, 2 and Kol 3,12-14.

#### **Hymn**

#### **Speech**

**Questioning** (may be omitted)

XX do you wish together with YY to receive God's blessing?

YY do you wish together with XX to receive God's blessing?

**Intercession:**

Dear Heavenly Father, grant to these two grace, happiness and blessing to soul and body! Grant that they may love one another with faithful love and serve you sincerely in all things, that they may live as your dear children and finally be gathered unto you in the eternal mansions. Hear us in the name of Jesus.

Our Father...

Peace be with you.

**Hymn****3. Reading**

Fil. 4,4-7

**Blessing**