

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
Office of National Mission

Policy Area 7: Marriage and Family

“Be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us... (Eph. 5:1-2a) “giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.” (Eph. 5:20-21) Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her... ” (Eph. 5:25) “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord...” (Eph. 5:22) “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right...Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” (Eph. 6:1, 4)

Marriage and family are instituted and ordered by God, the Holy Trinity. God created mankind in His image and likeness, male and female, to be fruitful and to exercise benevolent dominion over the creation (Genesis 1:26-27). The one-flesh union of a man and a woman in marriage, from which family is created and from which children are to be cared for and nurtured in sacrificial love, is a blessed gift of God. Marriage and family are not only created and ordered by God at creation, but after the fall into sin, marriage and family find their restored identity, value, and purpose in the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross for His bride, the Church. The vocation of every Christian, especially within marriage and family, is lived out by faith in Christ in the sacrifices of love they make for each other. As God’s created order is under attack, it is our privilege to confess before the world and for humanity’s benefit the goodness of God’s gift of marriage and family as He has ordained them in Holy Scripture and as they are imbedded in natural law.

1. The ONM will work collaboratively with the Council of Presidents, the Office of Pastoral Education, and other Synod stakeholders (i.e., CUS institutions, RSOs and others) to identify and/or develop and provide programs of catechesis, education, and supporting resources for confessing and protecting the Biblical order of marriage and family. Supporting resources will include the provision for Scriptural, ecclesiastical, natural-law and vocational content for the following:
 - a. godly marriage, life and family; (Colossians 3)
 - b. the defense and nurture of the vulnerable and defenseless from the threats of abortion, euthanasia, sexual and domestic abuse, neglect and abuse of the elderly and disabled, and any medical and/or technological manipulation that seeks to change the very good creation of male and female, or that strives to modify what it means to be *human* according to the Word of God; (1 Peter 3:15)
 - c. the enhancement of relationships, connections and sponsorships between adults and youth within the same congregation; (Galatians 6:2)
 - d. the service of men and women who are single in the body of Christ either by choice, gift or circumstance (Matthew 19);
 - e. the Christian understanding of being a single man (Matthew 19), or husband (Genesis 1-2; Ephesians 5:25-33) or father (Genesis 1; Proverbs 22:6);
 - f. the Christian understanding of being a single woman (Matthew 19), or wife (Genesis 1-2; Ephesians 5:22-24) or mother (Genesis 1; Titus 2:3-5);
 - g. the Christian understanding of the leadership and nurturing roles of men and women in the body of Christ, the family of God;

- h. serving families and individuals who suffer from the pain and isolation of barrenness, divorce, death, disability and other manifestations of the brokenness caused by original sin; and
 - i. serving people of all cultures and helping them navigate challenges they face (Revelation 7:9)
2. The ONM will equip district coordinators to serve as liaisons between the districts and the ONM for the enhancement of godly marriage, life and family.
 3. The ONM will work collaboratively with all Synod districts and other Synod stakeholders to identify and/or develop and provide resources to assist pastors and congregations as they offer ministry and comfort to individuals and families suffering under the society's assault upon God's gifts of marriage, family, human sexuality and the sanctity of life and the dignity of every person, and families suffering under the pain of the loss of loved ones in death, divorce, barrenness, domestic violence and the abuse of children and the elderly.

Scriptural References for Policy Area: Family

Ephesians 5:15—6:4

See then that you walk ^[c]circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, ¹⁶redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

¹⁷Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, ²⁰giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹submitting to one another in the fear of ^[G]God.

²²Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. ²⁴Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in everything.

²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶that He might ^[u]sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. ²⁸So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord *does* the church. ³⁰For we are members of His body, ^[b]of His flesh and of His bones. ³¹“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” ³²This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. ³³Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife *see* that she respects *her* husband.

6 ¹Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ²“Honor your father and mother,” which is the first commandment with promise: ³“that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.”

⁴And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.