

Why Marriage Matters

from the Social Justice Committee

On November 6th Minnesotans will be asked to vote to amend our constitution to deny marriage for same sex couples. The session of Oak Grove has voted to oppose this amendment and authorized the Social Justice Committee to educate and encourage action to defeat it. We on the committee realize that not all Oak Grove members agree with this decision. As discussions come up, we strongly encourage respectful dialogue without “demonizing” those with whom you disagree.

Many are comfortable with granting rights to same sex couples (there are 515 rights married couples have in Minnesota that are denied to same sex partners) but say “just don’t call it marriage”. The point is to say that marriage matters! Marriage matters to gay people in similar ways that it matters to everyone. Couples get married because they want to be there for each other in sickness and in health, when times are good and when things get tough. What defines a marriage is love and commitment, and the ability to protect your family.

Much of the argument regarding this amendment is based on faith. Available in the narthex is a booklet entitled “speaking from faith for marriage equality”. In it you will find resources regarding this issue and suggestions from other faith based organizations to help you to make this important decision. We encourage you to pick one up, read it and follow up on other faith based sources to which it refers.

And, remember, if this amendment fails, same gender marriage still WILL NOT be allowed in Minnesota. It will, however, incorporate discrimination into the state constitution. We strongly encourage you to vote NO on this issue.

Some highlights from the booklet:

- Civil marriage for gay couples does not affect religious marriages, religious institutions or clergy in any way. No religion would be forced to marry same-sex couples, or recognize same-sex marriages within the context of their religious beliefs.
- Gay and lesbian couples may seem different from straight couples, but they share similar values — like the importance of family; worries — like making ends meet or losing a job; and hopes and dreams — like finding that special someone to grow old with, and standing in front of friends and family to make a lifetime commitment.
- There have been attempts to create marriage-like relationship systems, but they don’t provide the same security and protections. Most straight couples would never want someone telling them they couldn’t marry, and when they think about it, many say they wouldn’t want to deny that for anyone else.

Lastly, to quote Wheelock Whitney “Many things can undermine a marriage. But my happiness has never depended on depriving others of their happiness. My marriage has never needed the exclusion of others from marriage. I am not threatened by seeing others find love and celebrate it.”