

7/5/07 SCHMELING PRESS CONFERENCE

Good afternoon. We have lost our effort to overturn the decision of the discipline hearing committee to remove Pastor Schmeling from the clergy roster of the ELCA. In a decision dated July 2, the Committee on Appeals affirmed the decision that Pastor Schmeling should be removed from the roster because he has entered into a lifelong, loving partnership with another man.

The discipline hearing committee had set August 15 as the date for Pastor Schmeling's removal. But, at the urging of Bishop Ronald Warren of the Southeastern Synod, the Committee on Appeals also ruled that the discipline hearing committee should have made Pastor Schmeling's removal immediate. Therefore, Pastor Schmeling was removed from the clergy roster of the ELCA as of July 2, the date of the Committee on Appeals decision.

This ends the judicial process in the ELCA. The Committee on Appeals decision is final, and there is no further opportunity for appeal within the church courts. But, as the Committee on Appeals notes in its decision, it will report its decision to the Churchwide Assembly that convenes on August 6, and that "report to the Churchwide Assembly provides the opportunity for revision" of the policy that precludes pastors in same-gender relationships from serving as rostered clergy.

At the appropriate time, I will be happy to answer any questions you may have about the decision.