



Bishop Michael J. Pryse

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Archbishop Janis Vanags, Archdiocese of Riga
M.Pils iela 4, Riga, LV-1050
Latvia

Dear Archbishop Vanags:

On behalf of the Eastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC), I am writing to you to express our disappointment and concern over the decision the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Latvia (ELCL) took on June 3, 2016, to amend its constitution to restrict ordained ministry to men only, thereby excluding women from ordained ministry in the ELCL.

With this decision, the full participation of women, and the gifts they bring as members of the body of Christ, has been diminished in the life of the church. Baptized into Christ's body by the same Spirit, we are set free and called to be a sign of the new thing God is doing in and among us. As the apostle Paul writes, "So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!" (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Restricting the call of ordained ministry to men only denies the Spirit-given gifts of all the baptized, women and men. We are saddened by the hurt this has caused women in the ELCL who have served faithfully as ordained ministers. We grieve with those women who experience the call to ordained ministry and can no longer answer it within the ELCL. We agree with the Lutheran World Federation's public statement that this action by the ELCL serves to "devalue all women and increases their discrimination in both church and society."¹

On behalf of the Eastern Synod of the ELCIC, I would urge you to reconsider this decision so that all sisters and brothers in Christ can participate fully in the ministry of the church and in Christ's mission of reconciliation and healing.

Yours in Christ,

The Rev. Dr. Michael Pryse,
Bishop, Eastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

Cc: Bishop Einars Alpe, Daugavpils Diocese
Bishop Pavils Bruvers, Liepaja Diocese
Archbishop Lauma Zušēvica, Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad
Bishop Susan Johnson, National Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

¹ LWF Public Statement – Women in Ordained Ministry: Our Shared Goal, June 2016, lutheranworld.org