

# Questions about Performing Marriages in the Metropolitan Chicago Synod, ELCA

*(For information purposes only)*

The synod receives numerous questions about who is authorized to perform marriages within the synod.

- Only ordained ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) are authorized to perform marriages. No lay people, rostered (associates in ministry, diaconal ministers, or deaconesses), or otherwise, are authorized by the ELCA to perform marriages.
- Marriage within the state of Illinois is regulated by the (750 ILCS 5/) Illinois Marriage and Dissolution of Marriage Act (online at <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs5.asp?ActID=2086&ChapAct=750%26nbsp%3BILCS%26nbsp%3B5%2F&ChapterID=59&ChapterName=FAMILIES&ActName=Illinois+Marriage+and+Dissolution+of+Marriage+Act%2E>).

(750 ILCS 5/209) (from Ch. 40, par. 209)  
Sec. 209. Solemnization and Registration.)

This section states that marriage may be solemnized "... in accordance with the prescriptions of any religious denomination..." and that "...provided that when such prescriptions require an officiant, the officiant be in good standing with his religious denomination..."

- ELCA ordained ministers in good standing in other synods are allowed to perform weddings in the Metropolitan Chicago Synod, ELCA.
- There are no state or local requirements for ELCA pastors to be licensed, certified, or otherwise authorized to perform weddings. In each county of the synod (Lake, Cook, Kane, and DuPage), the couple wishing to be married is responsible for obtaining the appropriate license from their respective county office.

The synod does not provide legal advice, or information about marriage certificates, or other aspects relating to the marriage ceremony.