

Canadian Lutherans reject same-sex blessings: Local option turned down

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The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada has turned down a proposed resolution that would have given congregations a “local option” to conduct blessings for same-sex unions.

The motion—drafted by the ELCIC’s Church Council and needing a two-thirds majority to pass—received only 183 votes in favor while 220 delegates voted against it during the July 21-24 convention in Winnipeg.

Though Canada just became the fourth nation—alongside Belgium, the Netherlands and Spain—to allow gay and lesbian couples to marry, the new law does not oblige churches in Canada to perform same-gender marriages.

In light of the new Canadian law, said Raymond Schultz, the ELCIC national bishop, “we have to clarify for ourselves as a church what is the difference between marriage in the church and marriage by the state and what is the basis for relationship.”

With the 180,000-member denomination nearly evenly divided, said Schultz, who was reelected to four-year term as national bishop, “we have a lot more talking to do with each other.”