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## NEWS RELEASE

October 23, 2008

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**Statement by Dr. Gerald B. Kieschnick, president of The Lutheran Church—  
Missouri Synod, on Same Sex Marriage and Involvement with Arizona, California,  
and Florida on their Marriage Protection Amendments**

*St. Louis, MO – October 23, 2008* – Yesterday, Dr. Gerald B. Kieschnick, president of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, held a press conference and nationwide press teleconference to announce support of traditional marriage across the nation and particularly in the states of Arizona, California, and Florida where marriage amendments will be on the November 4 ballot.

Kieschnick's comments are as follows:

"In less than two weeks, the American people will face a highly significant battle. United States citizens will have the opportunity to make a statement about traditional marriage that will affect the course of our nation for generations to come. In the states of Arizona, California, and Florida, marriage protection amendments are on the ballot. In these three states, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, based upon our deeply held principles, will do all we can to help protect marriage as a divinely created relationship between one man and one woman."

"As one of the largest U.S. Christian church bodies, with 2.4 million members nationwide and more than 212,000 in Arizona, California, and Florida combined, we urge our members in those states and Christians across the nation to educate themselves on the marriage issue in the short time left before the election. We must protect marriage between one man and one woman for the sake of our society as we know it and as humanity has always known it. Voter participation on November 4 will be absolutely necessary and part of the responsibility to our nation that we bear

as Christian citizens. It is the exercise of this duty, privilege, and honor that helps make our country great.”

“Just 12 days ago, the Connecticut Supreme Court legalized same- sex marriage in that state. In the midst of this action, which is one more step in the continued moral decline of our nation, those who represent the vast majority of the citizens of our country cannot remain silent.”

“As a Christian body in this country, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod believes it has the duty and responsibility to speak publicly in support of traditional marriage.”

“In the present context, we and other Christians cannot be silent. Accordingly, we as a church body urge our leaders, congregations, and members-particularly our 212,000 members in California, Florida, and Arizona-to give a public witness against the social acceptance and legal recognition of homosexual "marriage.”

“We are not alone in this. Across America, there is a broad and bright coalition of likeminded people who agree that the protection of traditional marriage is good public policy. This coalition comprised of Jews, Christians of many stripes, and many others does not agree on all things, but it does agree that the institution of marriage is nothing more and nothing less than the sacred union of one man and one woman. Collectively, our job is to educate and inspire our respective constituencies-particularly, for the moment, in California, Florida, and Arizona-to become a force for good in this regard.”

“Finally, we pray that all people, especially men and women properly united as husbands and wives, will honor God's divinely ordained relationship of marriage. We do so with the deep conviction that God intends marriage to be a picture of the relationship that exists between Christ and His bride, the Church. And we pray that all husbands and wives will give thanks to God for the blessings of marriage-loving, honoring, and cherishing one another, even as Christ does the Church.”

For interviews and complete transcript including audio, contact Deborah Hamilton, 215-815-7716 or Felicia Horton, 303-726-9731.