

# The Rectory of Saints Cyril and Methodius Orthodox Church

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*Feast of Saint Sampson the Hospitable*

Dear Members and Friends of Saints Cyril and Methodius Orthodox Church, Terryville, CT:

Christ is in our midst!

On Friday, June 26, 2015, by the narrowest possible margin, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled in the case *Obergefell v. Hodges* that states may not ban same-sex marriages and must recognize same-sex marriages issued in other states. In this ruling, as in the case *Roe v. Wade* that addressed the issue of abortion in a tragically erroneous fashion in 1973, the Court made a mistake and did not settle the question. The question was, in fact, settled millennia ago by God and no mere human can undo what God has established.

Orthodox Christians affirm that marriage is the lifelong union of one man and one woman. Orthodox Christians affirm that loving marriage is a beautiful mystery that mirrors Christ's love for the Church and the Church's love for Christ. Orthodox Christians affirm that marriage is meant to be fruitful and result in the procreation of children. Fruitful marriage is the means by which the Kingdom of Heaven is populated. Orthodox Christians affirm that ideally every child will be loved, nurtured, and raised up to maturity by his or her biological parents, parents who are living in God-established, God-blessed, permanent, self-sacrificial and loving commitment to one another and to the children they have together brought into the world.

Orthodox Christians also affirm that gender is meaningful and not malleable. Human beings are born, by the will of God, as female or male, and that distinction is important and to be respected. Orthodox Christians affirm that all men and women are equal before the face of God, but that no two distinct persons are identical. Part of every human being's identity is his or her gender, which is a fact that must be respected. A person's gender is a God-given gift, and is to be embraced and lived out as such.

Orthodox Christians also affirm that every human person, regardless of creed, color, citizenship, or persuasion, is to be cherished and appreciated as a child of God, loved by God and capable of being found worthy of eternal life with God in His Heavenly Kingdom. However, this does not mean that those who are living in error are to be affirmed in their error.

Rather, all are called to repentance; all are called to seek to know God's Will and to live in conformity to that Divine Will. Indeed, Orthodox Christians affirm that true freedom is found only when one chooses to live within the parameters set by God's Will. Living by God's commandments frees us from the tyranny of sin.

Orthodox Christians affirm the very real danger of being too sure of ourselves, and appreciate that all honest persons experience moments of confusion. Nevertheless Orthodox Christians also affirm that Truth is a concrete reality, which can be discovered and lived by. Indeed, Orthodox Christians affirm, with joy and gratitude, that Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life. The wonderful paradox of Christianity—the Life lived in Christ—is that accepting to be “servant of God” is, in fact, the only path to a life in which there is no element of servitude, but only perfect freedom and joy.

With prayerful best wishes,

In Christ,

Archpriest John Hopko, Pastor  
Saints Cyril and Methodius Church  
Terryville, CT