Trinity Lutheran Church 1000 North Park Avenue Herrin, IL 62948

Commission on Theology and Church Relations 1333 S. Kirkwood Road St. Louis, MO 63122-7295

Dear Samuel Nafzger, Executive Director and Members of the CTCR,

In keeping with bylaw 1.8.1-2, our pastor and congregation have been actively following the first step of dissent: to express dissent "within the fellowship of peers." We have enclosed a copy of some of the materials that we have used to express our dissent.

With this letter, we bring our dissent "to the attention of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations." Furthermore, it is our understanding that we are now permitted by bylaw 1.8 to express our dissent "as an overture to the convention calling for revision or recision," at the 2007 Synodical Convention.

Based on the Word of God and our conscience, let it be known that we dissent from: **2004 LCMS Convention Res. 3-06A**(commending the CTCR document, "Guidelines for Participation in Civic Events") because the document does not unambiguously forbid the participation of LCMS pastors in syncretistic and unionistic services in the future. Instead, the majority opinion allows for participation in joint prayer services by claiming that Christian and non-Christian clergy could "take turns" offering prayers("serial" prayers) without it being joint worship.

2001 LCMS Convention Res. 3-07A(commending the CTCR document, "The Lutheran Understanding of Church Fellowship") because it is being used—contrary to its original intent—to give approval to LCMS pastors participating in syncretistic and unionistic service because they were, "offering prayers, speaking and reading Scripture at events sponsored by governments," and this new interpretation has been referred to as "the official position of the Synod" in official 2004 Synodical reports of the President.

1989 LCMS Convention Res. 3-05B(establishment of licensed lay deacons to provide pastoral services) because it is contrary the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, which require a pastor with a regular call for the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments (Jeremiah 23:21, Romans 10:15, Hebrews 5:4, and Article XIV of the Augsburg Confession, "It is taught among us that nobody should publicly teach or preach or administer the sacraments in the church without a regular call);"

2004 LCMS Convention Res. 5-09(to affirm district programs that equip laity for ministry) because it is contrary the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, which require a pastor with a regular call for the preaching of the Word and the administration

of the Sacraments (Jeremiah 23:21, Romans 10:15, Hebrews 5:4, and Article XIV of the Augsburg Confession, "It is taught among us that nobody should publicly teach or preach or administer the sacraments in the church without a regular call);"

2004 LCMS Convention Res. 3-08A(To affirm the Conclusions of the {*unapproved*} 1994 CTCR report, "The Service of Women in Congregational Offices") because it does not apply the Scriptural teaching on the Order of Creation(1 Timothy 2:11-12, 1 Corinthians 14:34-35) to both the pastoral office and all humanly established offices and thus allows women to hold positions in the church in which they would have authority over a man.

2004 LCMS convention Res. 8-01A("To Amend Bylaws on Ecclesiastical Supervision and Dispute Resolution.") because the effect of 2004 Res. 8-01A removes the Word of God as the only rule and norm of faith and practice in the LCMS(Article II of LCMS Constitution). Instead, the decision of the District President determines when to initiate formal proceedings that will apply the Word of God. The District President must follow any opinion received from either the CCM or the CTCR, even if contradicting with the Word of God. 2004 Res. 8-01A prohibits a public response to public sins as required by the eighth commandment(see LC, sec. 284).

2004 LCMS convention Res. 7-02A(To Amend Synodical Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws Regarding Officer and Board Responsibilities) because the Word of God does not remain the only rule and norm of faith and practice in the LC-MS(Article II of LCMS Constitution). Instead, the opinions of the Commission on Constitutional Matters(CCM) are also a rule and norm of faith and life in the LC-MS.

Although we recognize that bylaw 1.8 is simply concerned with dissent from "doctrinal resolutions and statements," let it also be known that we are very troubled by the lack of discipline concerning those who are teaching and practicing falsehood, which is not in keeping the "official" doctrine of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod.

- Although the LCMS officially professes the historic and Scriptural teaching of closed communion, many congregations within the LCMS practice some form of **open communion** without being disciplined. In our Synodical President's reports he minimizes the present false practices as being only differing practical applications.
- 2. Although the LCMS Constitution and bylaws requires the "exclusive use of doctrinally pure agenda, hymnbooks, and catechisms," many congregations are being encouraged to follow the false revivalistic worship of the Reformed without being disciplined. Our Synodical President has been heavily promoting **Contemporary Worship** from within his Synodically approved *Ablaze!* Program. His convention reports consider Contemporary Worship to be acceptable practical applications. The 2004 Convention Resolution 2-04 has directed the Commission on Worship toward "the development of diverse worship."

Finally, we must disagree with the CTCR statement, "*In Statu Confessionis*: A Response to Questions from the Praesidium of the Synod" (April 15, 2005). We have included a proposed overture to our District Convention that should explain our position.

Trinity Lutheran Church Passed on Sunday, September 18, 2005 Mr. Brian Miller, Congregational Chairman The Rev. Michael Henson, Pastor

cc: The Rev. Gerald Kieschnick, President, Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod The Rev. Herbert Mueller, District President, Southern Illinois District The Rev. Raymond Hartwig, Secretary of the Synod

Paper copies and other documentation are being sent through the U.S. Mail.