

Lutheran Church Falls Into Same-Sex Marriage Deception

Norway's Lutheran Church voted on Monday in favor of allowing same-sex marriage, becoming the latest of a small but growing number of churches worldwide to do so.

Last year the French Protestant Church allowed gay marriage blessings, while the U.S. Presbyterian Church approved a change in the wording of its constitution to include same-sex marriage.

In a vote at the annual conference of the Norwegian Lutheran Church on Monday 88 delegates out of 115 in total backed same-sex marriage.

"Finally we can celebrate love independently of whom one falls in love with," said Gard Sandaker-Nilsen, leader of the Open Public Church, a religious movement within the church that had campaigned to change the rules.

Under the new rules, priests who do not want to marry a same-sex couple will still have the right to object.

The vote by Norway's Lutheran Church reflects increasingly liberal attitudes in wider Norwegian society to issues such as homosexuality.

Norway became the second country in the world after Denmark to allow same-sex registered partnerships in 1993. The Nordic country of 5.2 million people has allowed civil same-sex marriage since 2009.

Some 74 percent of Norwegians were members of the Lutheran Church last year, according to the national statistics agency, but that number has been declining. {eoa}