

# Resolution on Reconciled in Christ Designation and Affirmation of Welcome



People of differing sexual orientations are often scorned by society and alienated from the Church; we wish to make known our caring and concern by both our Affirmation of Welcome and designation as a Reconciled in Christ congregation affiliated with Reconciling Works: Lutherans for Full Participation.

Becoming a Reconciled in Christ congregation involves that Trinity Lutheran Church will affirm a public statement of our ministry of inclusivity. Our congregation will be designated as an open and affirming congregation in community with a growing number of other ELCA Lutheran congregations, synods, and church-related organizations.

**BECAUSE** we affirm with the apostle Paul that in Christ “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female.” (Galatians 3:28) Christ has made us one body with many members, equal at the foot of the cross and at Christ’s table of blessing and promise. God’s extravagant welcome is sure.

**BECAUSE** reconciliation is what we do; it is what the Apostle Paul says we are all called to do. Reconciling prevents disagreements from growing into permanent separation. We are not only Lutherans concerned about the inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people; we are Lutherans working for the full participation of all through a ministry of reconciliation.

**BECAUSE** Trinity Lutheran Church members understand our congregation to be welcoming and already affirming activities typical of Reconciling in Christ congregations, namely:

- Trinity’s welcome which stems from our mission statement and is included on our website; and
- Trinity people have expressed that we are a welcoming congregation and many wish to articulate this clearly to their gay and lesbian children, siblings, friends, and all the LGBT community.

**BECAUSE** the ELCA’s Social Statement on Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust adopted in August 2009 states that “While Lutherans hold various convictions regarding lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships, this church is united on many critical issues.”

**BECAUSE** the Bishops of the ELCA in an open letter dated March 22, 1996, stated the following:

- “our congregations should reflect our Lord’s invitation to all...”
- “urge our congregations to reach out to all God’s people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ,” and
- a 1991 Churchwide Assembly action declared “gay and lesbian people, as individuals created by God, are welcome to participate fully in the life of the congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.”

**BECAUSE** a Reconciled in Christ congregation does not require its members to adopt a specific set of morals, nor is it required to bless same-sex unions, we simply affirm publically that Trinity will be a congregation that welcomes all people to worship God as part of its community of faith.

**BECAUSE** we affirm that people of all sexual orientations and gender identities share the worth that comes from being unique individuals created by God and are to be welcomed within the membership of Trinity Lutheran Church.

**BECAUSE** a Council appointed Task Force found consensus in favor of an Affirmation of Welcome and R.I.C. designation, discovered through numerous listening sessions, educational forums, and Bible studies with all ages of people since its inception in the spring of 2013.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that Trinity Lutheran Church become a Reconciling in Christ congregation to extend God's extravagant welcome and a genuine invitation for acceptance and full inclusion to all people as expressed in the following Affirmation of Welcome.

*We have been reconciled as one through Christ by His grace and love, and it is for this purpose that we affirm the following:*

*People of all ages, ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, gender identities, educational backgrounds, marital status, physical or mental ability, theological perspective, and economic conditions share the worth that comes from being unique individuals created by God, and as such are welcome in the worshipping community of Trinity Lutheran Church.*

*We invite all to visit and be a part of the worship community of Trinity.*

**Forwarded for approval with the recommendation of the Trinity Council.**

The Reconciled in Christ Task Force:

Dan Alexander  
Sharon Bram  
Peggy Casper (Co-chair)  
Erik Dovre  
Paul Karker (Co-chair)  
Ron Retzlaff  
Sarah Wright