

# PRIDE GUIDE

## for Reconciling in Christ communities

ReconcilingWorks  
LUTHERANS FOR FULL PARTICIPATION



## WHY SHOULD RIC COMMUNITIES ATTEND THEIR LOCAL LGBTQ PRIDE FESTIVAL?

Although Pride participation is not a requirement to becoming a Reconciling in Christ (RIC) community, it can be an effective form of outreach to the LGBTQ community. Marching in a Pride parade or hosting a booth at a Pride festival can be an incredibly powerful experience for both the LGBTQ participants as well as members of your community. Keep your eyes and your heart open! You may encounter an LGBTQ youth who has been told by their family or church that God no longer loves them. Or you may meet an LGBTQ person who hasn't stepped foot in a faith community for years and has never heard a specific invitation with their identity.

The only requirement for a Lutheran community to be listed as RIC is for them to pass a welcome statement which specifically includes "people of all sexual orientations and gender identities" or "LGBT" people.



*The Rev. Dr. Guy Erwin, bishop of the Southwest California Synod, ELCA, presides at the SoCal Lutheran Street Eucharist at the Los Angeles Pride Parade*

## WHEN DID PRIDE BEGIN?

One Summer morning in the early hours of June 28, 1969, a group of customers at Stonewall Inn, a popular gay bar in New York City's Greenwich Village, had grown angry at the harassment by police, took a stand and a riot broke out. The next night, an even larger crowd comprised of LGBTQ people (and many of their allies) returned, with numbers reaching over 1000. For hours, protesters demonstrated outside the Stonewall Inn until the police sent a riot-control squad to disperse the crowd.

On June 28, 1970, the first Gay Pride marches took place in New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Chicago commemorating the anniversary of the riots. Similar marches were organized in other cities. Today, most cities hold annual Pride events in June to mark this enormously important moment in the modern struggle for LGBTQ rights.

## RAINBOW RECOMMENDATIONS

### SoCal LUTHERANS SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

SoCal Lutherans team up with Hollywood United Methodist Church each year to host a Street Eucharist at the Los Angeles Pride Parade.

**"It's how we show that we, as a community of LGBTQ people and allies, are not in the least ashamed of our Christianity. L.A. faith communities had a huge positive impact, especially in the early days, on the LGBTQ rights movement,"** Rev. Caleb Crainer says.

### HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA



Holy Trinity Lutheran Church marches in the parade and hosts a booth at Charlotte Pride. Pastor Nancy Kraft says Holy Trinity builds momentum in their congregation by creating t-shirts each year, collecting rainbow clothing to wear and hosting temple talks leading up to Pride. **"One year a member of the congregation gave a talk about how much it meant to him when he saw Holy Trinity in the parade. It never occurred to him that churches even cared. He wouldn't have ever known, if we didn't go,"** Pr. Kraft says.

# FIND YOUR LOCAL PRIDE CELEBRATION

"Anytown, USA" "gay pride festival"



If you are not sure your local town has an LGBTQ Pride parade or festival, go to <http://google.com> and search for "[Your Town Name] and [Gay Pride Festival]". If your town isn't large enough, make sure to extend your search to larger towns near you.

You can also visit: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_LGBT\\_events](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_LGBT_events) for a list of all events worldwide with website links for more information.

## GRACEFUL ENGAGEMENT

It is possible you may encounter protesters at Pride who do not share your values of welcome, inclusion, and celebration of LGBTQ people in the church. They may be limited to "free-speech" zones or in some cases, be freely roaming about. It is important to model "graceful engagement" (not arguing with people, but sharing God's love and grace) while representing your faith community and the Reconciling in Christ program.

Almost always, the best strategy is not engaging with these protestors. Many times they leave due to lack of interaction from Pride attendees. Instead of engaging, make sure to smile extra wide and hold your signs extra high to send a clear message that God loves all our LGBTQ children!

For more info about how to use graceful engagement, download the "Building an Inclusive Church" toolkit from our website: [www.ReconcilingWorks.org/BIC](http://www.ReconcilingWorks.org/BIC)

## TIPS BEFORE YOU CELEBRATE...



Sometimes the "line-up" time for a parade can be early. If you are marching, you could be on your feet for one to three hours straight, so it is important to wear supportive and functional footwear. Pro tip: if you want cuter shoes post-parade, pack some flip flops or stylish slip-ons in a backpack for later.



If you are planning to make a day of it, don't forget to bring water bottles, an extra cell phone battery, sunscreen, a picnic blanket to sprawl out on, and power snacks like nuts, fruit, and hummus (sometimes festival food can get expensive). You can also use this bag to collect candy, stickers, and tattoos you collect!

## RECONCILING IN CHRIST TATTOO



FRONT TATTOO



BACK LABEL



[RWKS.org/estore](http://RWKS.org/estore)



The majority of pride festivals are extremely family friendly. If you have young ones, make sure you check the festival's schedule and web page beforehand for activities specifically geared toward families with young children including tobacco and alcohol free spaces.

## CENTRAL LUTHERAN CHURCH SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

Central Lutheran Church has been organizing Lutherans to be a major part of the Seattle Pride Parade growing the Lutheran presence from a few dozen individuals representing several congregations



to 200+ individuals and representing close to 2 dozen Lutheran congregations & organizations. David De Block, a lead organizer with Central Lutheran, says, "It's important for us as Christians to go out to those who have traditionally been marginalized and persecuted by the church, hear their stories, and bring hope. It's also a LOT OF FUN!"

### "PRO TIPS" FROM DAVID

1. Find your dedicated family or families who feel passionate about being there
2. Invite other congregations around you to put together a team to join you! Use ReconcilingWorks' "Find a Congregation" at [RWKS.org/RIC](http://RWKS.org/RIC) tool to seek out others if you need.
3. This is an event that builds over time. In 2015 we had our Bishop march with us because we got on his calendar in 2014. Plan ahead!

## ST. ANSGAR LUTHERAN CHURCH PORTLAND, MAINE



St. Ansgar Lutheran Church has an entire web page devoted to their participation in LGBTQ community events including Pride. As one of Maine's 2 RIC congregations, they host a Pride Worship Service and put together a marching contingent to march behind their churches banner! They pass out "Martin Wufer" dog treats and provide a pet "watering station" at the Pride festival where people can conveniently learn about their welcoming ministries!