

Reconciling In Christ

Sample Affirmations of Welcome

Writing a welcoming statement from scratch can be an intimidating task. Here are several sample affirmations. Please feel free to use them as guides, templates, or inspiration in writing an affirmation that proclaims the unique commitment to welcome of your community. This document is also available for download on the RIC page (www.reconcilingworks.org/ric/about-reconciling-in-christ) under the heading “A sample Affirmation of Welcome.”

For ReconcilingWorks to recognize your community as Reconciling In Christ, your statement must welcome people of all gender identities and sexual orientations. This can also be accomplished by naming lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people among those who are welcome. Of course, in discovering who needs an explicit welcome in order to be assured that they are welcome among you, you may also add other demographics or characteristics to your welcoming statement.

Scripture is a rich resource for this journey of welcome. You may want to incorporate a scripture passage with your welcoming statement. Galatians 3:28 and 2 Corinthians 5:17-18 are the most commonly used passages.

Sample Affirmation 1

As a community of the people of God, we are called to minister to all people of our world, knowing that the world is often an unloving place. Our world is a place of alienation and brokenness. Christ calls us to reconciliation and wholeness. We are challenged by the Gospel to be agents of healing within our society.

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. We acknowledge this reconciliation extends to people of all gender identities and sexual orientations.

Because lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons are often scorned by society and alienated from the Church, we wish to make known our caring and concern. It is for this purpose that:

- People of all gender identities and sexual orientations share the worth that comes from being unique individuals created by God;
- People of all gender identities and sexual orientations are welcome within the membership of this congregation upon making a common, public affirmation of faith; and
- As members of this congregation, people of all gender identities and sexual orientations are expected and encouraged to share in the sacramental and general life of this congregation.

Sample Affirmation 2

_____ is a spiritual community that celebrates the gifts of God that empower us to engage in the struggles of life, to care for each other, and to serve Christ where we work and live. _____ commits to being a Reconciling In Christ congregation.

We welcome the participation of people of all ages, ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, gender identities, educational backgrounds, and economic conditions—all who want to join in community to honor God and be of service to people.

Sample Affirmation 3

Welcome to long-time Lutherans, Christians from every tradition, and people new to faith.

Welcome to all who have no church home, want to follow Christ, have doubts, or do not believe.

Welcome to new visitors and old friends.

Welcome to people of every age and size, color and culture, every sexual orientation and gender identity, socio-economic status, marital status, ability and challenge.

Welcome to believers and questioners, and to questioning believers.

This is a place where you are welcome to celebrate and sorrow, rejoice and recover. This is a place where lives are made new.

Welcome on this day.

Sample Affirmation 4

Who's Welcome?

Who is welcome here at _____?

If you are Asian, Hispanic, Black or White...

If you are male or female or transgender....

If you are three days old, 30 years old, or 103 years old...

If you've never stepped foot in a church; or if you are Buddhist, Roman Catholic, agnostic, or are a life long Lutheran...

If you are single, married, divorced, separated, or partnered...

If you are straight, gay, lesbian, or bisexual...

If you are a Republican, Democrat, Independent, Socialist, or not registered to vote...

If you have, or had, addictions, phobias, regrets, or a criminal record...

If you own your home, rent, live with your parents, or are homeless...

If you are fully-abled, disabled or a person of differing abilities...

You are welcome here at _____!

Sample Affirmation 5

We, the community of _____, proclaim the message that the Grace of our Lord is infinitely inclusive and that everyone is welcome through our doors. We believe that Christ calls us to reconciliation and wholeness in a world of alienation and brokenness.

As disciples of Christ seeking justice and reconciliation among all peoples, we at _____ welcome all into the fullness of God's love. We welcome everyone, without exception and regardless of sex, race, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical and mental ability, age, or station in life. We recognize that each person is a unique creation of God and, through Grace, is called a child of God.

All are welcome at _____.

All are welcome to worship, to hear the Good News, to receive the sacraments, and to share in fellowship and service. All members of _____ pledge ourselves and our congregation to exercise our faith in Christ, treasuring one another's similarities while embracing our God-given differences. We pledge to ourselves and to all others that we will strive to live as a reconciling people, in our life together and in our outreach to the world.

Sample Affirmation 6

Here at _____, we are committed to being a radically loving and welcoming community of faith, centered in the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, in faithfulness to the Gospel and our Lutheran heritage, and to the best of our ability, we promise to provide programs, ministries, and pastoral care to all who seek God in this place.

As a community of God striving to be open to all people, we at _____ welcome all to join us as we struggle to better understand the mysteries of God's teachings. We are challenged by Christ to care for, to love, to understand, and to listen to each other, regardless of race, age, gender and gender identities, marital status, physical and mental abilities, sexual/affective orientations, national origin or economic status. We celebrate together our unity as God's people. _____ is a place for each person to shine in their own unique gifts.

Sample Affirmation 7

We welcome all who are seeking God's love and grace. We welcome all because God welcomes all, regardless of race or culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, or relationship status. We welcome all without regard to addictions, physical or mental health, imprisonment, socio-economic circumstances, or anything that too often divides us. Our unity is in Christ.

Sample Affirmation 8

We commit to being a Reconciling In Christ Congregation.

As followers of Christ, who calls us to reconciliation and wholeness, we, the members of _____, welcome all who are seeking God. Further, we welcome into membership all who have been baptized into Christ.

Believing that all are one in Christ Jesus, and aware that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons have been excluded from membership in some congregations, we welcome lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons, as well as those who may have been excluded because of other human distinctions, such as race, economic status, or gender. We thus affirm that this welcome includes all people. We pledge to ourselves and to all others that we will strive to live as a reconciling people, in our life together and in our outreach to the world.