

## Reconciling in Christ

# SAMPLE AFFIRMATIONS OF WELCOME

Writing a welcoming statement for your community is an exciting, rewarding, and historic task! To spur creativity and inspiration, and to provide examples as templates or guides, here are several REAL affirmations from congregations and other Lutheran settings from around North America. Please feel free to use them in

writing an affirmation that proclaims your unique commitment to the welcoming environment of your community. This document is also available for download at: [ReconcilingWorks.org/Resources/RIC/SampleAffirmations](https://ReconcilingWorks.org/Resources/RIC/SampleAffirmations)



Please keep in mind: the foundation of the Reconciling in Christ status is an Affirmation of Welcome that specifically names people of “all gender identities and sexual orientations.” This can also be accomplished by naming “lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT)” people among those who are specifically welcomed. Of course, in the process of discovering who needs an explicit welcome in your community, you may also wish to add other demographics or characteristics to your Affirmation of Welcome. 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.

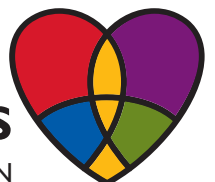
### Sample Affirmation I

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 we affirm:

- 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

In response to the overwhelming love of God, we stand in awe of the wideness of God's mercy. In faithfulness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, mindful of our Lutheran emphasis on grace, and rejoicing in the celebration of our shared baptismal journey, we welcome as members of our extended family all those who have ever felt excluded by the Church because of their race, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental challenges, financial resources, or family status.

As followers of Christ, all members of \_\_\_\_\_ are compelled by the Gospel to seek reconciliation and wholeness in a world that is all too often an unloving place. Therefore, rejoicing in God's abundant grace, we extend a special welcome to all. Whether you are LGBT; whatever your country of origin or ancestry; whether you are a believer, a doubter or a seeker; in Christ's love, we welcome you, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit we can work together to usher in God's Reign of justice, peace, and mercy.

*-Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Newmarket, ON*

## Sample Affirmation 3

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, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, agnostic, or are a lifelong Lutheran...

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

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

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 \_\_\_\_\_!

*-Based on statement by Augsburg Lutheran Church in Brampton, ON*

## Sample Affirmation 4

\_\_\_\_\_ is comprised of a wide variety of people.

We are diverse in age, passions, cultural background, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, gender identity/ expression, ethnicity, body shape, artistic preferences, physical abilities, emotional maturity, education, and we have different ideas on how best to change the world.

As much as we are different, we also have some common characteristics.

The geographic location of those in our community can unite otherwise disparate people in profound ways.

Most of us have some form of kinship with the person of Jesus. We may not agree on all of the complexities of this world-changing man who lived 2000 years ago, but we agree that his radical calls for grace, inclusion, and

freedom from oppression still echo today. These cause us to try and live as humble followers, doing our best to live in accordance with these calls, as individuals and as a collective community.

We believe strongly that all persons have valuable stories and infinite worth.

We want to be bearers of goodness, and not harm.

We want to live more sustainably, increasingly living in tandem with creation, rather than in opposition.

We are on the path of realizing that our goal in life is not to "get it together," and instead are seeking to embrace our frailties as connection-points to God and others.

*-Echoes Church in Bellingham Washington, 2015*

## Sample Affirmation 5

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, gender expression, 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.

*-ReconcilingWorks Example*

## Sample Affirmation 6

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.

Believing that all are one in Christ Jesus, and aware that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer 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 or economic status. 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.

*-ReconcilingWorks Example*

## Sample Affirmation 7



Abiding Savior  
Lutheran Church

*United in Christ. Welcoming All.*

● Ability ● Age ● Ethnicity ● Gender Identity ● Language  
● Life Circumstances ● Marital Status ● Race ● Sexual Orientation

You are welcome.

Your family, children, friends, spouses and partners are welcome.

Your diversity and uniqueness are welcome.

*-Abiding Savior Lutheran Church in Fairview, NC*