

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 Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Partners. 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/Sample



In drafting your welcome statement, ReconcilingWorks requires the naming of LGBTQIA+ people in either one of the following ways to be recognized as a Reconciling in Christ (RIC) partner:

- people of all sexual orientations and gender identities
- lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual/aromantic (LGBTQIA+) people

As you discern this journey, you will have discovered the intersectionality of this holy conversation. Just as LGBTQIA+ people come in all different bodies, there will be other demographics you may wish to lift up in your welcoming statement; for examples, see Step 6 in the Building an Inclusive Church (BIC) Toolkit. Scripture is also a rich resource for this journey of welcome; for examples of affirming scripture verses, check out the "Reconciling Scripture for Lutherans: On Sexuality and Gender Identity" resource at ReconcilingWorks.org/resources/worship

Sample Affirmation I

Lutheran Church of Our Savior is a congregation with a big heart. We all know how difficult it is to be new, but we want you to know that no matter who you are or where you find yourself in life, you are invited to join us for worship and fellowship. Come to hear God's Word, share in the Sacraments and discover new ways to reach out to the world with God's peace and grace. Everyone is a child of God. From crying babies to enthusiastic seniors, we recognize that we are all called to be one body with many members. We welcome people of all races, ethnicities, shapes and sizes of every marital status, political affiliation, sexual orientation and gender identity or expression. Those of different faith traditions; different physical, mental and emotional abilities and those in recovery or struggling with addiction are always welcome. We sincerely hope you join us in our journey toward greater love, understanding, and mutual respect for each other. The bottom line: We Welcome You! We know that no matter who you are, Jesus accepts you and so do we. May our prayers, the hearing of God's Word, and God's grace and love make our burdens lighter, our hearts encouraged, and our souls refreshed.

-Lutheran Church of Our Savior, Patchogue, NY, 2019

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LUTHERANS FOR FULL PARTICIPATION



Sample Affirmation 2

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.

-Lutheran Campus Ministry, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, 1985

Sample Affirmation 3

_____ 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 4

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 5

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, queer, intersex, and asexual/ aromantic persons have been excluded from membership in some congregations, we welcome people of all sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions, 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