

Expanding Our Welcome

December 2023 Edition

Consider This

Words have power. This power concept seems intuitive while also elusive to many of us. Colloquial phrases like “think before you speak” or “don’t send an email that you wouldn’t want your boss to read” demonstrate an understanding of the power of word choice in our shared social awareness. Words can possess varying significance and wield power differently depending on several things such as who uses them, when they are used, and where they are used. Even the smallest changes to our diction can shift the meaning of a sentiment—in both what we mean to say and in how it is received.

We invite you to ponder how your language regarding gender, race, class, sexuality, creed, nationality, ability, age, and all identities molds the spaces you inhabit. How does the language in your church bulletins, in your prayers, in your signage either welcome or push people away? What sort of opening gestures does your use of language create? What is foreclosed by the use of certain words, or the lack of others? How can you use the power of language to create spaces of inclusion, care, and love for all?

Helpful Resources:

<https://www.reconcilingworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Deepening-Expanding-Worship-PDF-2021.pdf> Deepening and Expanding Worship by Reconciling Works

<https://swwasynod.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/ELCA-doc-on-Expansive-Language.pdf> ELCA inclusive and expansive language

Holiday Resources:

[8 Queer Tips to Navigate the Holidays](#) - video by Queer Theology

[The Lone Queers Survival Guide to Awkward Family Time](#) article by Jes Tom on Them - A dose of humor for transgender people

RIC Work Team

The RIC Work Team serves as a resource for congregations and ministries throughout the synod as we all seek to expand our welcome in creative and life-giving ways. In this new publication we hope to provide practical ideas for your congregation to consider. Each month will have a different focus and some resources you may find valuable.

Co Chairs	Pastor Jonette Blakney	prblakney@trinitylutheranparkland.org
	Pastor Jean DeVoll-Donaldson	pastorjean@beautifulsaviorlutheran.com
Staff	Pastor Rebecca Shjerven	shjervr1@plu.edu



Southwestern Washington Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.