

Expanding Our Welcome

January 2024 Edition



Leadership training is a key component of expanding Welcome in our congregations. Think about the way that leaders are trained in your church. Does this training include the skills of intentional Welcome?

A few ideas:

- As congregations, we want prospective members to know the agreed-upon values of our community. Our Welcome Statement and Core Values provide public proclamation to visitors. Such references can shape expectations and clarify priorities for everyone coming in the door or looking at your website. Keeping those lists forefront in sermons and newsletters cultivates familiarity for everyone.
- Council training is a good place to train elected leaders in the practices of Welcome. These leaders can encourage consistent messaging and practices throughout the congregation.
- Select a staff person or volunteer to take responsibility for reading anything submitted for publication, checking content and language, before it is released to the newsletter, church publications, or website. If that person has an outsider perspective, they may be quicker to register questionable wording than a seasoned church member. Note that the OHSU Inclusive Language Guide is a very comprehensive resource - link: <https://www.ohsu.edu/inclusive-language-guide>
- Ministry opportunities expand a church's welcome while also educating the congregation to warmly receive any visitor or guest. For example, the OPOP, One Parish, One Prisoner, program has been educational as many congregations prepare to meet their assigned inmate. Guidance has brought clarity about inmates' general experience and concerns, increasing the congregation's ability to welcome their person without missteps. OPOP link: <https://undergroundministries.org/learning>

Thank you for all you are doing to expand your Welcome thoughtfully!

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.

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Consider This

RIC Work Team



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