

Expanding Our Welcome

January 2025 Edition

Visibility Matters in Church

Emily Eastwood, who led Lutherans Concerned 25 years ago, before it became Reconciling Works, used to say, “**You have to have some to get some.**” She meant gay/lesbian seekers of a church would be less likely to stay without other gay folk apparent. Nowadays, a lengthened table and widened awareness includes transgender and non-binary. No matter who they are, if these visitors discover others who identify as they do, it may help them feel more comfortable.

Also, the more “out” a member is, the more enthusiastic their welcome often is. They model the Welcome policy by establishing friendly connections with any visitor. Watching for anyone new who is standing back a bit, the intentional out-member might be especially warm and engaging when they sense a visitor is queer.* Demonstrating ease and expansiveness conveys a significant message that all are welcome. Just as we can entertain angels unaware, we might also be welcoming siblings or parents of queer children. Our availability to share info about the church invites guests to inquire about the church’s welcoming spirit (and policy).

“Out” members can offer perspectives on queer experience to church individuals or groups with some authority. In administrative discussions, they can offer a first-person perspective.

All-hands-on-deck are needed to support the ministries and increase the love practiced in any congregation. Queer people feeling ownership in their church have lots of energy to offer, many creative ideas to provide, and depths of devotion and commitment to share. All of it helps, in every way possible!

*Queer is less cumbersome than GLBTQIAA+.

~Newsletter articles written by ELCA Lutherans in the SWWA Synod who support RIC

Consider This

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.

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God's work. Our hands.