



Southwestern Washington Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

The Rev. Richard E. Jaech, Bishop

A Statement of Support for People of All Genders Bishop Rick Jaech

As followers of Jesus, we affirm every person's inherent dignity and worth. We recognize that each individual is fearfully and wonderfully made in the image of God (Psalm 139:14; Genesis 1:27). This truth is reflected in the vast diversity of human experience and expression, including the ways people understand and live out their gender. The truth is that the transgender and nonbinary experience is not "new." It is the language we use regarding the wide array of chromosomal combinations and expressed gender identities that is new.

I am deeply concerned by the recent executive order, which rejects the concept of gender identity in favor of an oversimplified view of humans as either male or female. This view does not account for the complexities of human identity as experienced in the lives of many individuals throughout time. Jesus calls us to love one another as He has loved us (John 13:34), extending compassion and respect to all. As part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, we are committed to a faith that welcomes and supports everyone, including those whose gender identities are beyond the binary. We believe that God's love is expansive and inclusive and that our call as Christians is to walk alongside all people, affirming their humanity and dignity.

In Galatians 3:28, the Apostle Paul writes, "There is no longer Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." This radical statement reminds us that our value in God's eyes is not determined by our sex, gender, ethnicity, or any other signifier of identity but by the reality that we are all beloved children of God in Christ. There is disagreement in our church and our nation about how to respect and accept people of all genders. Despite the disagreement, we believe that all Christians and all people of goodwill are called to reject hate and acknowledge that everyone is worthy of respect. As followers of Jesus, we commit to upholding the value of every person, respecting their God-given identity, and offering support and care to all who seek it. We trust that God's love transcends human limitations and divisions.

In the social statement, "Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action," the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America commits to "advocate for and support laws, policies, and practices that respect diverse bodies rather than discriminating against, objectifying, or devaluing them" (p. 60). No one should experience violence or discrimination because of their gender identity or sexual orientation. We stand in solidarity with all people, especially those who are marginalized or misunderstood, and we seek to create spaces where everyone can feel seen, heard, and loved.



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Please prayerfully join with local leaders in your congregations, communities and beyond, to advocate for and with neighbors of all genders and orientations. God, after all, does not give us a spirit of timidity, but one of "power, love and sound judgement." (2 Timothy 1:7)

God bless you as we enter this season of Lent. May it be a time of reflection and new life in every way.

In Christ,



The Rev. Richard E. Jaech

Bishop

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