

STORYTELLING

March 2025

Congregations Come Together to REGROUP and RECOMMIT

- Why does RIC matter?
- If we already are welcoming, why is it important to be RIC?
- If we are already RIC, how do we steward this identity in life-giving ways?

On a rainy Saturday afternoon, thirty-five people from eleven congregations in the SWWA Synod gathered at Peace Lutheran Church in Puyallup to engage questions related to *being or becoming* a Reconciling in Christ congregation. RIC congregations commit to Welcome, Include, Celebrate and Advocate for LGBTQIA+ siblings in Christ and to live these values out loud.

Our afternoon began with coffee and the opportunity to connect with each other informally. We were grounded with prayer and song and then received the gift of people's stories. Four individuals shared their personal stories about why RIC deeply matters to their sense of belonging in the Church. We were reminded of the harm that has been done in the name of Christ and the need for repentance and a commitment to a "more excellent way" of being the Body of Christ in the world.

After brainstorming a variety of topics of interest, we broke into small groups for discussion around each topic. Small group time provided the opportunity to learn a bit about others and where they are on the RIC journey. We were able to learn about resources and connect with those who share common interests and concerns. Seeds of relationship were planted.

To close the afternoon, we came back together to harvest the learning, the questions and the blessings of our time together.

Many thanks to Pastor Nate Sutton and the people of Peace Lutheran for their gracious hospitality. Thank you to the RIC Work Team for planning the afternoon, for those who bravely shared their stories and for all who showed up with open hearts and minds.

If you are interested in this type of event in your community, please contact the RIC Work Team through the Synod Office. Let's keep the conversation going. . . !

~ by Bishop's Associate, Pastor Rebecca Shjerven