

# Expanding Our Welcome

April 2026 Edition

A Newsletter from the  
Reconciling in Christ Work  
Team of the Southwestern  
Washington Synod

The Synod's RIC Work Team seeks to cultivate a culture of hospitality toward LGBTQIA2+ people and remove barriers to full participation in the life and ministry of the Southwestern Washington Synod.



## Joyful Resistance

A therapist friend told me once that the brain is incapable of holding both fear and curiosity at the same time. It's very understandable to be afraid in these moments- afraid of our rights being stripped like they have for our trans siblings in Kansas- afraid that protecting our neighbors will result in punishment or death like it did for our queer sibling Renee Good in Minneapolis. And yet we also need to leave room for curiosity: to wonder together what might be possible if we build power in our churches and communities. To imagine a world that might not exist yet. As Christians, we have practice looking forward to God's Kin-dom, though we know it is both already here and not yet. We have practice believing in resurrection and that death and injustice do not have the final word.

"We buried our friends in the morning, we protested in the afternoon, and we danced all night." This famous quote is attributed to queer activist [Dan Savage](#), describing how the community navigated the AIDS epidemic. It highlights that finding joy through dancing and community is a vital, defiant form of resistance.

As a queer Pastor on the Synod RIC committee, I see this as a space to organize: to build power with one another so we can push for liberation in the church and world through anti-racism and support of full inclusion for LGBTQIA+ people. And I see our 2 Joyful Resistance events this Spring/Summer as ways to know one another better, have fun, and form coalitions across congregations. And also to play Bingo.

I hope you can join us!



Information on the second Joyful Resistance gathering in the northern part of the Synod coming soon!

~submitted by Rev. Anna Czarnik-Neimeyer, Synod RIC Work Team member

We invite you to visit our friends at **Reconciling Works** "Lutherans for Full Participation" for helpful resources or reach out to the **Synod Administrator** - we're happy to assist!

### Our Team *(in alphabetical order)*

Pastor Jonette Blakney *team chair*  
Pastor Anna Czarnik-Neimeyer  
Stefanie DeZarn *synod liaison*  
Deanna Eichler  
Mary Ann Nelson  
Pastor Nate Sutton

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 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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