



Dear [Short Salutation],

For over the past 50 years ReconcilingWorks has been committed to advocating for the acceptance, full participation, and liberation of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions within the Lutheran Church. We do this holy work in all three expressions in the life of the church - in congregations, synods, and Churchwide.

Over the past decades of ministry there have been many times when lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, aromantic, plus (LGBTQIA+) people have been put at the center of conversation in the life of the church. 2025 will be no exception and will hold lasting impacts for LGBTQIA+ people and their families in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). As we prepare for this public conversation at the ELCA Churchwide Assembly this summer, ReconcilingWorks wants to remind our LGBTQIA+ siblings that we are here for you.

Your person and your love is made in the fullness of God.

You are named Beloved by God.

Your gifts and call make the Lutheran Church a truer reflection of the Divine.

ReconcilingWorks will never stop working for the Church to see, name, and celebrate us as such.

"In 2022, the Churchwide Assembly [authorized two reconsiderations](#) (see pages 4-5 and 11 of this Assembly action summary) of the [Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust](#) (2009) social statement:

- *Reconsideration #1: A review of specific text references that “would consider the import that marriage legally is now a covenant between individuals;” review specific wording “in light of public acceptance of marriage of same-gender and gender-non-conforming couples;” and “consider references to diversity of family configurations;”*
- *Reconsideration #2: A fresh consideration of the “church’s current concept of the four positions of bound conscience” found on pages 19-21 of Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust.*

In the Spring of 2024, the ELCA Church Council Executive Committee seated a task force, which immediately began work on the first reconsideration. The task force represents a diversity of perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences. Click [here](#) to learn about task force members. The task force has taken up the first reconsideration only at this time. The work on the second reconsideration of bound conscience will not start until Fall 2025, as affirmed by ELCA Church Council at the start of the work.

Consistent with ELCA protocol, the results of the task force’s work on Reconsideration #1, which are simply editorial, are now available for public comment and feedback. Receiving feedback from across the church is a vital step in discerning together. Your perspective matters.” -

<https://www.elca.org/faith/faith-and-society/current-social-writing-projects/human-sexuality-gift-and-trust-reconsiderations>

[Survey: Reconsideration of the ELCA Social Statement on Human Sexuality](#)

Through the end of January, the ELCA is requesting feedback on *“the results of the task force’s work on Reconsideration #1, which are simply editorial.”*

While we commend the work of the task force as they do the work asked of them by the 2022 assembly, we know this ongoing conversation continues to center LGBTQIA+ members of the ELCA and their families as an issue to be discussed and debated. Asking for editorial feedback on a document that is a reference point of harm for members of the LGBTQIA+ community is challenging. Because changes are “simply editorial”, this social statement of the ELCA will continue to lack the nuance of the fullness of LGBTQIA+ people, single people, divorced people, and partnered people. Until the ELCA is able to have a clear position of affirmation of LGBTQIA+ people and their families, there will be opportunity for ongoing harm to members of the community without accountability for that harm.

Beloved LGBTQIA+ siblings, nothing can separate you from the love of God and your own holy and beloved existence in the world.

As ReconcilingWorks has spent time with the editorial changes we offer the following reflections as an invitation for your own personal discernment as you provide your feedback to the ELCA based on the key areas of their survey response form.

“Marriage: Shelter and Context for Trust”

LGBTQIA+ people have always known that families are diverse and expansive in definition. In review of this section there are a few things that rise to the top of concern and wonder for ReconcilingWorks.

1. This section, even with its edits, continues to lift up the idea that marriage is meant to be between one man and one woman using scriptural passages from Mark and Genesis to support this idea of a binary way of being. (Line 11-15)
2. By naming that not all people are in agreement with the contemporary complexity of marriage, the document makes an assumption that there is a right and wrong way to think about the institution of marriage. (Line 17-22)
3. It is hard to see how this section fully supports the flourishing love of God when members of historically underrepresented groups continue to be marginalized. (Line 38)
4. There seems to be a universal expectation that there is a clear way to have a successful marriage. However, this section does not address the unique individualities of each person who made the public commitment of marriage. A healthy and successful marriage does not look the same for any two couples. A legal marriage contract between two people does not automatically create the best, safest, and most beneficial outcome for the people or community (116-122)

“Lifelong, Monogamous, Same-gender Relationships”

State and Federal marriages for LGBTQIA+ people have only been available for a little over a decade in the United States. For LGBTQIA+ people who have been forced to create their own understanding of relationships rooted in love, mutual respect, and forgiveness, forcing a universal ideal of marriage continues to perpetuate decades of harm against LGBTQIA+ families.

“Loving Families: Ground and Source for Social Trust”

While home might be a safe place for some/most heterosexual, cis-gender children and young people, that is not the case for a disproportionate amount of their LGBTQIA+ peers. LGBTQIA+ youth experience harassment, violence, and disownment from their primary caregivers. This results in a higher suicide and homelessness rate for LGBTQIA+ children and young adults. This section does not reflect the reality faced by LGBTQIA+ children and youth. (Line 252) Often “Chosen” families are the core community where love, mutual respect, and forgiveness is learned.

If you have the emotional capacity to read the edits to the Human Sexuality Gift and Trust and provide your personal feedback to the task force and the ELCA, we strongly encourage you to do so. [HERE](#) is the ELCA website page where you can find additional information and [the feedback form](#). If you do not, know that ReconcilingWorks will continue to do this holy work to the best of our ability. A deep and heartfelt thank you to each of you in the ways you make an impact in the life of your congregation, community, and the larger church. It is an honor to be a partner in ministry with you.

May the love of God fill you this day and the next and strengthen your work for justice and liberation ahead.

In gratitude,

ReconcilingWorks Board of Directors