

# ReconcilingWorks

LUTHERANS FOR FULL PARTICIPATION



## MAKING AN IMPACT TOGETHER

Beloveds, the start of 2024 has been a hard one for many of us. The violence being done to historically underrepresented people groups, the trans, nonbinary, and intersex community, immigrants, the undocumented, women, and so many more feels overwhelming to manage. Thank God we do not do this work alone. Thank God, we have each other for support, resources, and care. Together in partnership we walk shoulder to shoulder on the path towards justice expanding the horizon of possibility.

As you and your congregation think about the ways you can be present in the work of justice and care, ReconcilingWorks will be adding more resources to our “Building Compacity for Justice” section of our Educational Resource section of the website.

ReconcilingWorks is committed to leading and walking alongside you in this chaotic time. The way we will make it through is being in community with one another. The more proximate we are to our congregation and community the better we will be able to see, name, and care for one another. Through the work of community, we will be able to share the heaviness of this time, allowing rest, encouragement, and resources for those who need it.

The work is big, but we have each other. The work is heavy, but there are many hands to carry it. God’s love is transformational, let’s be God’s love for our neighbors.

Grateful to be in this work with you,



Photo of Aubrey's family

*Thank you  
for all  
you do!*

-Aubrey Thonvold (she/they), Executive Director

Today is a great day to ensure ReconcilingWorks is able to continue the holy ministry of welcome, inclusion, celebration, and advocacy of LGBTQIA+ people in the Lutheran church.



### How to Give

**Make a gift online:**  
[reconcilingworks.org/donate/](https://reconcilingworks.org/donate/)

**Mail in your gift:**  
ReconcilingWorks  
P.O. Box 8070  
St. Paul, MN 55108

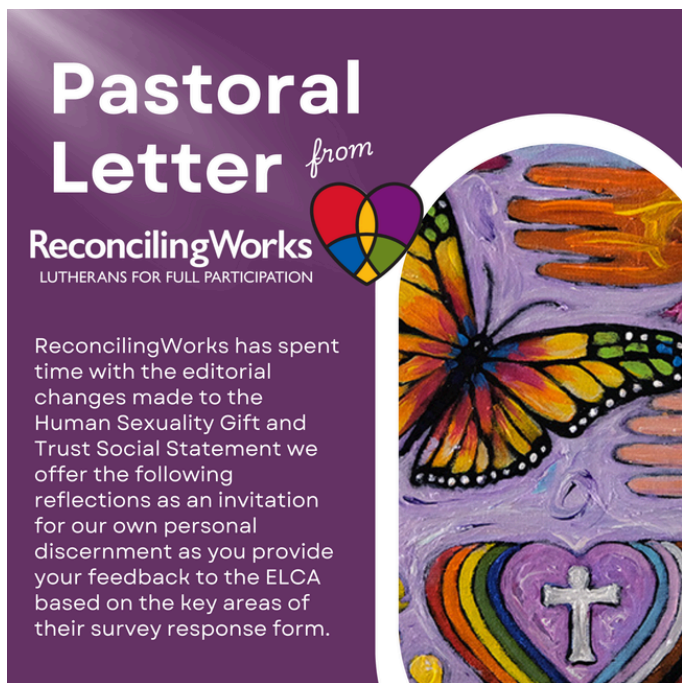
**Donor Advised Fund:**  
If you have an ADF you can request distributions be made to ReconcilingWorks.

**Employer Match:**  
If your employer offers an employee match this is a great way to give.

**Helpful Information:**  
ReconcilingWorks IRS Tax designation: Tax exempt under IRS tax code 501 (c)(3)  
IRS Tax ID: 84-3273216  
Address: P.O. Box 8070  
St. Paul, MN 55108  
Organization type: Human Rights, Social Justice, Advocacy, Educational, Religious

# PUBLIC MESSAGES FROM RECONCILINGWORKS THAT IMPACT LGBTQIA+ PEOPLE

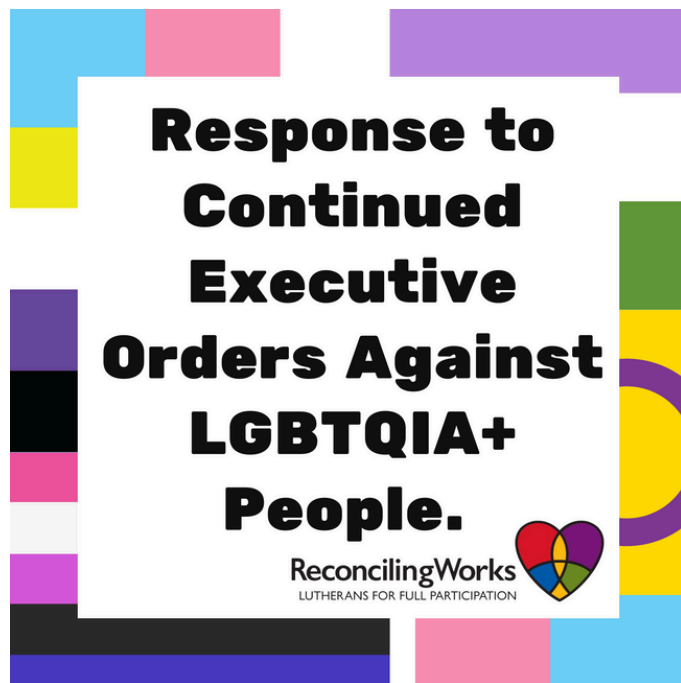
There is no shortage of ways your time, energy, and justice work is needed in the life of the church and our larger communities. As a way to support you in your justice work ReconcilingWorks has recently published two letters providing more insight into how we can make an impact in this time of uncertainty. To read the full letters visit [reconcilingworks.org/news/](https://reconcilingworks.org/news/)



*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, asexual, 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.*

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



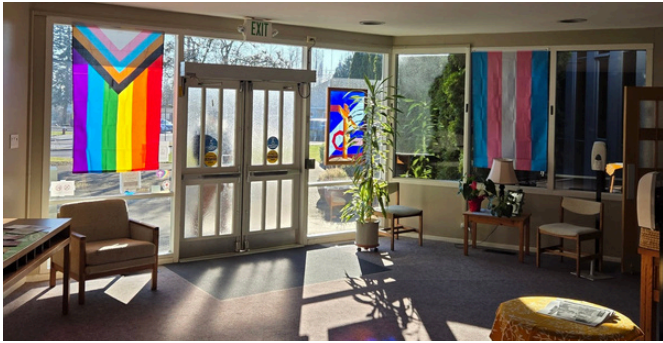
In one week, the world has experienced the Trump Administration – through Executive Orders – try to remove, deny, and endanger the lives of our Transgender, Nonbinary, Genderqueer, Intersex, and Gender Nonconforming siblings. Just by saying there are only two genders does not make it true. We have a God who exists beyond a binary.

1. Declaring there are only two genders, male and female.
2. Banning Transgender people from military service.
3. Ending gender affirming care for anyone under the age of 19.

ReconcilingWorks will continue to work with our 1,150+ Reconciling in Christ congregations and ministries to be a public witness in word and action, working against the dangers of White Christian Nationalism, discrimination, and erasures of people groups. We call upon all of our Reconciling in Christ partners – congregations, synods, and other ministries – to amplify your own voices in support of your LGBTQIA+ siblings.

# RECONCILING IN CHRIST PARTNERS' RESPONSES & ACTIONS TO EXECUTIVE ORDERS

In addition to ReconcilingWorks' response to the dangerous and harmful executive orders, we have been working to lift up and share Reconciling in Christ partners who have also made statements. The collection of statements have been shared on ReconcilingWorks social media platforms of Facebook and Instagram if you would like more details and links to their full statements.



*Faith Lutheran Church, Bellingham, WA  
Photo and quote from Facebook*

“When you come to church this Sunday, you may notice some changes in our narthex. As a Reconciling in Christ (RIC) church, we advocate for the acceptance, full participation, and liberation of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions within the Lutheran Church.

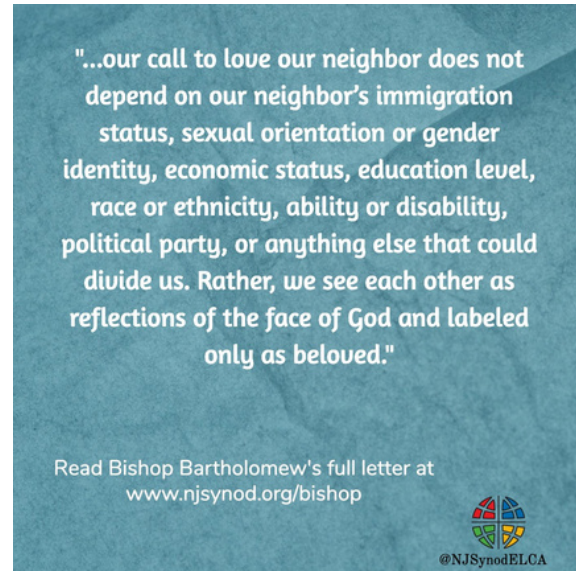
We also extend our welcome and support beyond our church walls to the Bellingham and Whatcom community. As a sign of our welcome, especially at a time when LGBTQIA+ people are facing increased threat and discrimination, we are showing our support.

We see you. We love you. You are welcome and safe here.”



*Central States Synod, Bishop Susan Candea*

“As the bishop and pastor of the synod, I publicly proclaim that you who are part of the Queer community are brave and beautiful. You reflect the incredible diversity of God’s creation. You refuse to conform to binary limited categories that seek to define your personhood. You instead trust who God has created and called you to be, continuing to witness to the love of God and the ways we can express that love through our communities where all are welcome.”



*New Jersey Synod, Bishop Tracie L. Bartholomew*

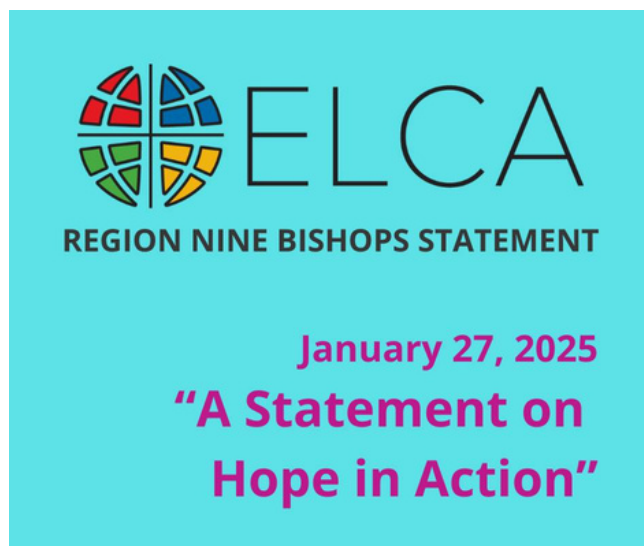
“Let me be clear, our call to love our neighbor does not depend on our neighbor’s immigration status, sexual orientation or gender identity, economic status, education level, race or ethnicity, ability or disability, political party, or anything else that could divide us. Rather, we see each other as reflections of the face of God and labeled only as beloved.”

## CONTINUED: RECONCILING IN CHRIST PARTNERS' RESPONSES & ACTIONS TO EXECUTIVE ORDERS



### *NorthWest Washington Synod, Prayer Message*

“In the wake of recent executive orders, we are reminded to not only give thanks for the gifts, wisdom, leadership, and faith of our LGBTQIA+ neighbors and siblings in Christ – but to ask the Spirit to embolden us in advocating for social, institutional and legislative change that reflects justice, total inclusion, and God’s boundless love for humanity in all its diversity. We are especially mindful of the hateful words and intentions toward those who are transgender, non-binary, gender queer and non-conforming. We pray that they know they are deeply loved. We pray for wisdom and courage to celebrate, protect, and advocate for these beloveds. We give thanks for the leadership of our partners at ReconcilingWorks.”



### *Joint Statement from Region 9: South Carolina Synod, Caribbean Synod, Virginia Synod, North Carolina Synod, Southeastern Synod, Florida-Bahamas Synod*

“Justice requires everyone, including members of the LGBTQIA+ community, to receive the same rights and access to care as they see fit. Marriage equality and access to medical care are constitutional rights. We are all members of one human family. Therefore, we approach immigration and LGBTQIA+ rights not merely as a political or legal issue, but as matters of human solidarity. However, even when tears fill our eyes, we will continue to hope in action, together.”

### *Joint Statement from Region 2: Southwest California Synod, Grand Canyon Synod, Pacifica Synod, Rocky Mountain Synod, Sierra Pacific Synod,*

“Studies of humans reveal rich diversity, showing that individuals do not neatly fall into two categories. Some people are intersex: their bodies are neither male nor female. People have a diversity of characteristics, most of which cannot be assigned exclusively to one sex or gender or another. Among humans, sex and gender are more accurately characterized as multidimensional.” (p.32)

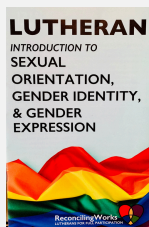
For transgender, non-binary, gender queer and non-conforming people, you are loved. To the families of those same people, know that the ELCA is not perfect or of one mind about many things, but as synod leaders we stand united in solidarity with and celebrate people of all gender expressions.

Please pray for all who are in harm’s way because of our President’s words.”

## RESOURCES FOR YOU & YOUR FAITH COMMUNITY

ReconcilingWorks has a multitude of resources to help support you and your faith community available in English and Spanish. Check out each store below.

Orders are shipped out weekly, so order soon to ensure you receive your package in time!



[www.reconcilingworks.org/purchase/](http://www.reconcilingworks.org/purchase/)

## RECONCILINGWORKS IN FARGO/MOORHEAD FOR RIC SUNDAY

The weekend of January 25th and 26th was busy for Deacon David Behling (he/him) this year. On Saturday, St. John's Lutheran Church in Fargo was the host for a Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Gender Expression [SOGIE] workshop. 30 folks gathered to learn and find strength in each other as our society and federal government become much less safe for LGBTQIA+ people. On Sunday morning, members of St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Fargo joined the folks at St. John's for RIC worship, with Deacon David preaching on the texts for the day. All in all, it was an awesome experience for Deacon David.



Photo of Deacon David leading SOGIE training in Fargo ND



ReconcilingWorks will be celebrating Black History month by lifting up and amplifying the stories, lives, and liberation work of our Black siblings. As an organization we are committed to the work of antiracism in our leaders, Reconciling in Christ partners, and policies.

# 2025 ELCA Synod Assembly Materials

Synod Assembly Season is always an impactful time in the life of the larger church. 2025 will be no exception. This year almost one third of 65 synods of the ELCA will be holding Bishop elections. The role of Bishop is critical in how LGBTQIA+ people experience welcome, inclusion, celebration, and advocacy in the church. One of the many reasonability's of a bishop is to determine how LGBTQIA+ rostered leaders experience candidacy and call. If you are looking for way to provide resources, tabling ideas, or support a Bishop's election, ReconcilingWorks has created materials for you. Use code **SYNOD2025** for 25% off items in our [eStore](#).

We pray for 20 Synods who will be holding Bishop Elections in 2025, 11 of which are Reconciling in Christ.


- Northwest Washington Synod: May 16 - 17, 2025 (RIC)
- Southwestern Washington Synod: June 13 - 14, 2025
- Oregon Synod: May 30 - June 1, 2025 (RIC)
- Montana Synod: May 29 - June 1, 2025
- South Dakota Synod: TBD
- Northwestern Minnesota Synod: May 30-June 1, 2025
- Southeastern Minnesota Synod: May 30 - 31, 2025 (RIC)
- Central States Synod: June 5 - 7, 2025 (RIC)
- Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod: May 15 - 17, 2025 (RIC)
- Metropolitan Chicago Synod: May 30-31, 2025 (RIC)
- Western Iowa Synod: June 13 - 14, 2025
- North/West Lower Michigan Synod: May 18 - 20, 2025
- Southern Ohio Synod: June 6 - 7, 2025
- New Jersey Synod: June 5 - 7, 2025 (RIC)
- Metropolitan New York Synod: May 2 - 3, 2025 (RIC)
- Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod: TBD
- Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod: May 17 and June 12 - 14, 2025
- Lower Susquehanna Synod: June 5 - 7, 2025 (RIC)
- Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod: June 6-7, 2025 (RIC)
- Southeastern Synod: May 29-31, 2025 (RIC)

We pray for these synods in their discernment.

God of love and liberation, as the synods of the ELCA prepare to gather, we ask that your Holy Spirit fill your people, accompanying them as they discern what it means to be people of faith and the church in this season of history. We ask that you inspire and lift up leaders for the office of synodical bishop who will do the work of justice, liberation, inclusion, and celebration of all you have named beloved. May we be a people and a church who reflect your love in all we do. Amen

## SYNOD ASSEMBLY MATERIALS


<https://www.reconcilingworks.org/2025-elca-synod-assembly-materials/>



Since 1974, ReconcilingWorks: Lutherans for Full Participation has advocated for the full welcome, inclusion, and equity of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual/romantic (LGBTQIA+) Lutherans in all aspects of the life of their Church, congregations, and community.

**Resources to Begin your Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Journey**  
[reconcilingworks.org/ric/become-ric/](https://reconcilingworks.org/ric/become-ric/)

- How to Become Reconciling in Christ (RIC)
- Faith Community Assessment Survey
- Building an Inclusive Church (BIC) Toolkit
- Reconciling in Christ Frequently Asked Questions
- "We're Already Welcoming, Why Do We Need to Say So?"
- Living the Journey - RIC Video Vignettes
- Online Trainings
- ReconcilingWorks eStore




**Resources to Set New Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Milestones**  
[reconcilingworks.org/resources/](https://reconcilingworks.org/resources/)

- Resources for Liturgy, Preaching and Worship
- Deepening & Expanding Worship: A Worship Planning Supplement
- Lutheran Guide to Advocate for LGBTQIA+ People in Church and Society
- Online Trainings
- ReconcilingWorks eStore


**Preparing for PRIDE Season**  
[reconcilingworks.org/purchase/](https://reconcilingworks.org/purchase/)

- PRIDE Worship Service
- PRIDE Parade Guide
- Apparel and Swag
- Buttons & Pins
- Temporary RIC Tattoos
- Banners




ReconcilingWorks P.O. Box 8070, Saint Paul, MN  
 (651) 665-0861 [reconcilingworks.org](https://reconcilingworks.org)

One pager to support folks who will be tabling or sharing information about ReconcilingWorks.



### 2025 ELCA Synod Bishop Election Questionnaire

- How have you worked with congregations to encourage them to be open to calling as rostered ministers - pastors and deacons - to who people who are BIPOC or identify as LGBTQIA+?
- What training/educational resources have you participated in that helped you recognize how white supremacy, misogyny, and queerphobia have impacted your life?
- How do you see the Bound Confessionals compromise (ELCA Churchwide Assembly 2009) and the four positions it describes having an impact on the church today?
- What actions steps will you put in place to provide financial, systematic, and pastoral support for people who are Rostered Ministers or in candidacy who are also from underrepresented or marginalized communities, especially those who are BIPOC or identify as LGBTQIA+?
- Nationally, the average age for someone to "come out" as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community is 16 and the percentage of youth and young adults identifying as Queer or LGBTQIA+ is now over 20% of their demographic. Given that, what do you think congregations and this synod need to do to see, name, and care for these youth/young adults and their families?
- How will you choose to handle expressed homophobia, transphobia, racism, and sexism by a Rostered Minister or member of your synod?  
 Can you define systemic racism/institutional racism and give an example where the ELCA is culpable in this system?
- With white supremacy still the cause of prejudice, discrimination, and violence perpetrated against marginalized people all over this country what would you see as your role as bishop in this synod, in the ELCA, and in the larger community?
- Are you committed to making this synod an organization that is actively anti-racist? If yes, name the steps you will take after becoming bishop to do this work. If not, explain your reasons for not doing this work.
- If elected, will you assemble a staff that reflects the rich diversity of the realm of God? What does that look like to you? Why is this important to you?



Bishop Election Questionnaire. For Synods who are electing a new bishop, consider including these questions in your discernment.

# LOVING THE MINISTRY & MISSION OF RECONCILINGWORKS



As the ReconcilingWorks Operations Manager I get to support this holy ministry behind the scenes. My techie self is thrilled to manage the software tools while I also get to talk with folks reaching out via phone and email. Here are some common Q & A's:

Q: I haven't seen our congregation celebrated for becoming RIC on the ReconcilingWorks website nor social media. When will we be celebrated?

A: Please bear with us as we begin to work our way through the backlog that occurred with staffing transitions. It will take a few months to catch up!

Q: Can you send someone to speak to our church?

A: We would love to support your RIC journey in this way. Please read our website page [RIC Info Calls & Speaker Requests](#) for more information and next steps to see what's possible.

Q: How do I let ReconcilingWorks know about our new welcome statement? And when will we receive our RIC Certificate?

A: Please complete the online "[RIC Partner Information Form](#)" on our website (found under RIC > How to Become RIC > scroll down to the yellow button). We will get your new RIC Certificate in the mail as soon as we can, usually 3 - 5 days after you've completed the online form.

Three months into this new position, it is easy to identify one of my favorite tasks - creating and mailing the RIC Certificates for new RIC Partners. I was so thrilled this week to mail out RIC Certificates to three new RIC Partner congregations! In just one week! I feel great joy with every new RIC Certificate that I create, taking time to reflect on and pray for all the people that were - necessarily - a part of that congregation's RIC journey. Holy ministry, indeed!

In peace and joy,  
Jennifer Trom  
Operations Manager



# RECONCILING IN CHRIST SUNDAY CELEBRATIONS

Since 1983, the Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Program has been a public way for faith communities to see, name, celebrate, and advocate for people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions in the Lutheran church. The RIC Program is made up of congregations, synods, colleges, seminaries, outdoor ministries, and other Lutheran organizations.

Hundred of Reconciling in Christ partners celebrated RIC Sunday 2025 in January. ReconcilingWorks is deeply grateful for all who partner with us through our flagship program. Here are some images shared with ReconcilingWorks of RIC Sunday.



*St. John's Lutheran Church, Des Moines*



*Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church, West Hills, CA*



*Faith Lutheran Church, Okemos, MI*



*Christ Lutheran Church, Highlands Ranch, CO*



*Grace Lutheran Church, Millsboro, ME*



*Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Vienna, VA*





*Faith Lutheran Church, Salisbury, MD*



## CELEBRATING NEW RIC PARTNERS

- River of Hope Lutheran Church (Hutchinson, MN)
- Messiah Evangelical Lutheran Church (Lindsborg, KS)
- Risen Lord Lutheran Church (Conifer, CO)
- Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church (Watertown, WI)
- New Hope Lutheran Church (Missouri City, TX)
- Christ Lutheran Church (Highlands Ranch, CO)
- Messiah Lutheran Church (Weatherford, TX)
- Zion's Lutheran Church (Trinidad, CO)
- Faith Lutheran Church (Warner Robins, GA)
- Bear Creek Camp (Wilkes-Barre, PA)
- Atonement Lutheran Church (Muskego, WI)
- Bethlehem Lutheran Church (St. Charles, IL)
- Bethany Lutheran Church (Crystal Lake, IL)



*Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Herndon, VA*



*Messiah Evangelical Lutheran Church, Lindsborg, KS*