

Additional Information to create (or update) your four RIC Partner Public Commitments



Commitment 1:

Clearly state a welcome to people of “all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions” or “LGBTQIA+” and name its commitment to "racial equity" or "anti-racism" in a Welcome Statement.

Anything in bold and quotations above must be included in your RIC Partner Welcome Statement to meet ReconcilingWorks commitments.

If your faith community has its own statement of racial equity or commitment to anti-racism, be it in public community documents or social statements, policies such as by-laws or constitutions, or in its Mission, Vision, or Value statements, this can also satisfy this RIC Partner commitment. A copy of this additional statement will need to be shared with ReconcilingWorks.

The language italicized and in quotations, above, must be incorporated into your welcome statement to meet this commitment, but don't let your welcome stop there!

A welcome statement is a chance to extend an invitation to others into your space, as well as a helpful tool of accountability for those a part of your faith community. Be creative and get inspired by God's boundless diversity of creation, and let your welcome statement reflect that in who you are prepared to intentionally welcome.

Next steps:

Gather a team of leadership and faith community members to look over your community's current welcome statement. Determine the best route, whether it be revising your existing statement or cultivating something new and exciting. Some things to keep in mind:

- Include the fullest extent of your faith community in this effort; be sure folks are aware of the partner commitment updates and your plan to make changes to this living document
- Check in with your bylaws and constitution. If updating your welcome statement requires a particular type of vote, have a plan in place and inform the community of this procedure
- Celebrate & Promote the new welcome statement. Find ways to incorporate it into daily faith community life!

TIP: Have a place on your website where your welcome statement is clearly

visible so guests have an idea of what to expect and members are reminded of their commitment to welcome.

Click on the Image Below for [RIC Sample Welcome Statements](#) to begin your work in updating your faith community's own welcome statement!

Commitment 2: Be open to calling LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC (Black, Brown, Indigenous, Person of Color) Rostered Leaders.

A Rostered Leader is any clergy/pastor or deacon in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA); this commitment extends to all areas of leadership within the life of your community.

At ReconcilingWorks, we believe that God values and embraces each person as a beloved child, that the Spirit gives a diversity of gifts for the common good, and that Jesus Christ calls us to work for justice. When a faith community welcomes and invites God's beloved by becoming RIC, this welcome extends to the full participation of that faith community's life, including roles of leadership.

Commitment 2, while specifically focusing on rostered leadership, should also extend into the variety of leadership roles you have in your faith community, such as board or council, staff, summer camp counselors, lay leaders, or other volunteer opportunities.

Preparing your faith community for this commitment deserves effort. The leaders who walk alongside your community play a vital role in the decision-making, modeling of care, and nourishing of your people's faith to be able to continue in the holy ministry of welcome, inclusion, celebration, and advocacy of LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC people!

Next steps:

Gather your leadership team and faith community members to discuss the best ways to implement this commitment. Discuss any ongoing education opportunities to support the larger faith community may find helpful. Some notes to keep in mind:

- Calling LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC leaders is about the acknowledgment of the unique and abundant gifts they bring to the life of the church, and a way to see the fullness of God's Kin-dom. There are too many spaces where LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC folx are either overlooked for roles of leadership or invited into spaces before communities are ready; this commitment is a commitment to equity and equal opportunity.

- Consider ongoing education to deepen and expand your understanding of intentionality around leadership in the life of your faith community.
 - [Intercultural Development Inventory \(IDI\)®](#): The IDI® engages in discussion and learning around one’s capacity to shift cultural perspective, and can be offered for your RIC Core Team, council or board leadership, and/or staff.
 - ReconcilingWorks “[Bias & Its Impact on Welcome](#)”: This is a pre-recorded training and digital workbook, perfect for individual or group learning.
- When voting, ensure all four public RIC partner commitments are present in the vote to update, so the whole faith community is aware of what this vote entails for them; for a sample of how to do so, check out Steps 8-9 in the [Building an Inclusive Church \(BIC\) Toolkit](#).

Commitment 2 does not need to be incorporated in the welcome statement language but should be voted on and affirmed similarly.

Commitment 3:

Allow sanctuary/community space to be used for LGBTQIA+ weddings and blessings.

If your faith community is looking for resources for wedding or blessing services to be more inclusive, see the [ELCA’s Marriage Resource](#) or ReconcilingWorks [Worship, Liturgy, & Scripture](#) material.

In 2020, ReconcilingWorks found that only 56% of RIC partners were open to holding LGBTQIA+ marriages/blessings in their community space or sanctuary. We believe that as a faith community invites God’s beloveds to participate in the life of their community through their RIC partnership, this invitation extends to all the ways in which LGBTQIA+ people are able to participate.

In 2015 the U.S. Supreme Court legalized LGBTQIA+ marriages, and yet the LGBTQIA+ community still experiences discrimination and ongoing challenges.

LGBTQIA+ do not have federal protections for public accommodation, leaving such protections up to individual cities, counties, and states. Without such legal protections, LGBTQIA+ people can be denied access to simple things like having a bakery make their wedding cake, or photography for their wedding. It also means LGBTQIA+ people can be denied access to essentials like housing, life-saving medical care, and skilled nursing facilities. Marriages and blessings of LGBTQIA+ unions are a vital way to live into your

commitment to hospitality for all people and should be shared publicly as a way to communicate your welcome.

Next Steps

Gather a team of leadership and faith community members to look over the current policies around wedding planning. Discuss any ongoing education opportunities to support the larger faith community. Some things to keep in mind:

- Review your community's constitution and bylaws to ensure there is proper documentation allowing and affirming LGBTQIA+ marriages and blessings; if updates are needed, be sure to consult with the governing bodies of your ministry.
- Update your website, forms, and practices to ensure clarity and care for queer couples looking to celebrate their union in your faith community's space. It can be helpful to use non-gendered language such as "partners" or "spouse" rather than "husband" or "wife" when advertising your marriage services.
- Familiarize yourself with supplemental marriage resources available to you, such as the [Evangelical Lutheran Worship Service of Marriage](#), to offer an array of hymns, readings, blessings, and gathering options that fit each unique union.

Commitment 4:

Make a meaningful contribution annually to support the national RIC program.

A **meaningful annual** contribution is determined by your faith community, its budget, and the understanding that your generosity funds the RIC Program. Meaningful contributions vary for each RIC partner.

ReconcilingWorks is an independently organized 501(c)(3) organization. This means that while we may be formally recognized by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), ReconcilingWorks does not receive its funding or operating budget from the churchwide expression. Our mission is funded by your generosity and others like you. Almost 90% of ReconcilingWorks' annual budget is made up of individual gifts and donations. This is why RIC Partner's annual contributions are a vital piece of your commitment as a partnering community! When one of our 1,000+ RIC Partners makes a meaningful contribution annually, ReconcilingWorks' ability to deepen and expand welcome to God's beloveds is greatly impacted.

At ReconcilingWorks, we recognize the past few years have brought many changes to our faith communities and their ability to be sustainable due to financial constraints. We use the language of "meaningful contribution" intentionally, asking that your community

determine the amount that is best to provide in the partnership between your faith community and ReconcilingWorks.

Your annual RIC Partner gift can be accomplished in a few ways:

- Online through the RIC Partner Giving link at [RIC Partner Giving](#).
- Mailing a check to:
ReconcilingWorks
PO Box 8070
Saint Paul, MN 55108

Next Steps

Gather a team of leadership and faith community members to discuss how you hope to accomplish the final partner commitments. Discuss what practices can be put in place to ensure this and the other partner commitments are adopted and lived into year after year. Some things to keep in mind:

- If adding ReconcilingWorks to your annual budget is not attainable, consider taking special offerings throughout the year to gather a contribution. This is a great way to continue the conversation in the larger faith community about what it means to be RIC and provide ongoing education on said days.
- Discuss with faith community members why giving matters in the relationship of this partnership. If you are looking for some resources to share, check out the “[Reconciling in Christ Frequently Asked Questions](#)” one-pager, or the “[Why Give](#)” page.
- Be sure to make a memo note in your check or online giving so ReconcilingWorks knows this contribution is in efforts to meet your RIC partner commitments.

For those who have already updated their partner commitments, ReconcilingWorks has noted your work and extends thanks to you for your ongoing engagement!

About the Reconciling in Christ LOGO

ReconcilingWorks believes **representation matters**. So we are excited to have a **NEW Reconciling in Christ (RIC) logo**! Inspired by the Progressive Pride Flag design, these updates to the RIC logo include the colors blue, pink, and white to represent our transgender siblings, as well as a black and brown stripe, to represent the fullness our Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) Community brings to the queer community. This logo is used by RIC Partners to better communicate their commitment to the work of welcome, inclusion, celebration, and advocacy of God's Beloveds.



New RIC Partners and existing RIC Partners that meet the four 2021 updated RIC Partner Commitments receive access to the updated RIC Partner logo.

Next steps:

Make sure you use this updated RIC logo throughout your faith community and start to incorporate it in new places as well. Here are some suggestions:

- Media/Website: Faith Community website pages, Facebook, Instagram, BlueSky, YouTube and other social media
- Communications: Newsletters, faith community mass emails, bulletins, new member packets, and other printed materials
- Art & Signage: In hallways, educational spaces, sanctuary, windows, doors, and outdoor marquees and banners