

## **Reconciling in Christ (RIC) FAQ**

### **What is the history behind us becoming a Reconciling in Christ (RIC) partner?**

In 2021, our Equity Task Force recommended to Church Council that we consider the RIC process. The pastors agreed, and Council voted to move forward. A group of 12 people agreed to be part of the RIC team to oversee the process. A 2021 congregational survey indicated that 76% were wholeheartedly in support of such a designation, while 14% said they wanted to learn more, and 10% said they did not support the designation. The RIC team planned opportunities for learning, creating a series of videos and listening sessions to provide education and gather feedback. In 2022, a second survey was offered, and 86% said they wholeheartedly supported become an RIC partner. Based on these results, it was recommended to the Church Council that we have a vote to formally become an RIC partner. In a special congregational meeting held at SOTV on May 7, we voted to be a Reconciling in Christ (RIC) partner and the motion passed with 90% yes votes.

### **What were we already doing to be inclusive?**

Our values statement was clear about our intention to be inclusive. (“All are welcomed and invited, inclusive of age, ethnicity, race, ability, faith background, gender identity, and sexual orientation.”) The pastors had discussed this understanding and commitment in sermons, classes, and confirmation. We requested pronouns for registrations in CYF programming and prior to confirmation. We had a gender-neutral restroom. We used inclusive language for God in worship and in our publications. Our digital sign used inclusive language and imagery.

To be clear, no other entity (e.g. ReconcilingWorks) dictated changes in how we do things here (other than that we now make a contribution to this organization as a partner). What changed is that we are more public about our commitment to be including and affirming. Our Equity Leadership Team is charged with recommending next steps for the journey.

### **What is the Equity Leadership Team and how do we interact with them as staff?**

The Equity Task Force is now the Equity Leadership Team, a standing team of the congregation. Pastor Peter Harrits and Alyssa Isaacs are the staff representatives to this team so they can be your first point of contact. How exactly staff and Equity work together will continue to evolve as this team becomes established. This team welcomes conversation and questions, and can be used as a resource and sounding board for making sure our communication, activities, and events are inclusive and accessible.

### **What does RIC stand for? What does it mean?**

RIC stands for the Reconciling in Christ program. The purpose of the RIC program is creating specific welcome to people of all sexual orientations, gender identity, and gender expression, and fostering a commitment to the work of racial equity/anti-racism. The RIC program is hosted by a Lutheran organization called ReconcilingWorks which embodies, inspires, advocates, and organizes for the acceptance and full participation of people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions within the Lutheran communion and its ecumenical partners.

### **What does LGBTQIA+ stand for?**

This is a term used for a community that includes persons of various sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions. “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual/Aromantic” (as taken from ReconcilingWorks’ website).

### **What are pronouns and why are they important? Why do some of you have them on your email signature/name tag, and others don’t?**

Pronouns indicate how a person identifies themselves and asks to be addressed. Understanding that there might be a difference between a person’s sex, gender identity, and gender expression makes the use of pronouns important. Staff are welcome but not required to include pronouns as they present themselves to others.

### **But we’re already welcoming everyone. Why did we become an RIC partner?**

Some groups have been historically and specifically targeted and excluded from church life (and from other parts of society as well). This designation is a matter not only of welcome and affirmation but also safety. Members of the LGBTQIA+ community will often look for this designation before worshiping in a particular congregation.

### **Who do I talk to if I have questions or want more information about this?**

Any of the pastors, Alyssa Isaacs, Kelsey Young, Jennifer Davidson.