





Proposal to revise our Welcome Statement

As part of the Welcome Journey Conversations, an important step will be to reflect on our current Welcome Statement and discern if it still clearly communicates to others Atonement Lutheran Church's public commitment to living as a fully Welcoming faith community on a lifelong journey.


Why should we consider updating our Welcome Statement? Many LGBTQIA+, Black, Brown, Indigenous, and people of color have learned by experience that they are not welcome in some faith communities, even in ones that state, "All are welcome!" A general statement of welcome is often heard as meaning "everybody but me," so it can take a special effort to communicate an authentic welcome.

The following are a proposed set of revisions to our Welcome Statement suggested by the Council, that keeps the history of our authentic welcome with updates to extend a more current invitation to all. The intent is to best reflect Atonement Lutheran Church at this moment, resonate with community around us, and continue to convey the unique and diverse faith community we desire to be. In October, we will gather feedback from the congregation in a survey as Part 3 of our Welcome Journey Conversations.

All You Are Welcome Here

Atonement Lutheran Church believes that all people are created by God and share the same need for forgiveness, hope and healing. Even on issues where it is difficult to reach a consensus, Atonement desires to reflect the love of Jesus with a welcoming spirit. Moving beyond the common distinctions of race, national origin, age,  gender,  physical, mental and emotional condition or capacity,  **physical and mental ability**, political perspective, personal history, marital status, sexual orientation,  **gender identity and expression**, economic or social situation, we seek to invite and welcome all people to experience God's love and grace.

Atonement strives to proclaim the Good News through worship and daily life, and to make disciples of all by nurturing faith. All people in a life-giving relationship with Jesus Christ are encouraged to let God's Spirit deepen their relationship. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to grow spiritually through worship, prayer, Bible study, fellowship and service as we participate fully in the life of this congregation.

Atonement endeavors to serve God through the discovery and use of spiritual gifts and to share God's mercy and hope to a world in need,  **working for racial equity, justice, and peace**. Our intention is to be ambassadors of Christ's love in the world. The life-giving work of Christ is accomplished as we discover and use the gifts that God has given us in our daily life and work.

"You Are Welcome Here"

Why is this important?

The phrase "All Are Welcome" has been used at times by those extending a conditional welcome, implying individuals must change their identity to be accepted.

Changing from "All" to "You" creates a personal invitation. "You Are Welcome Here" captures the desire to be diverse, friendly, and inviting.

"physical and mental ability"

Why is this important?

Each of our bodies and minds contain a different range of abilities. Changing from "condition or capacity" to "ability" celebrates what makes us each unique.

"gender identity and expression"

Why is this important?

Stating "gender" alone does not make a clear commitment towards accepting that someone's experience and interaction with the world can be more complex than our sex assigned at birth.

Welcoming all gender identities and expressions names commitment to full inclusion for LGBTQIA+, accepting everyone exactly as they are.

"working for racial equity, justice, and peace"

Why is this important?

As an ELCA congregation, our constitution calls on us to "Respond to human need, **work for justice and peace**, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society." (C4.03.f)

"Working for racial equity, justice, and peace" states our commitment to the systematic fair treatment of all races, going beyond the absence of bias and discrimination by seeking to create a just and peaceful world.