

714 Voting Members Emailed

572 emails sent out

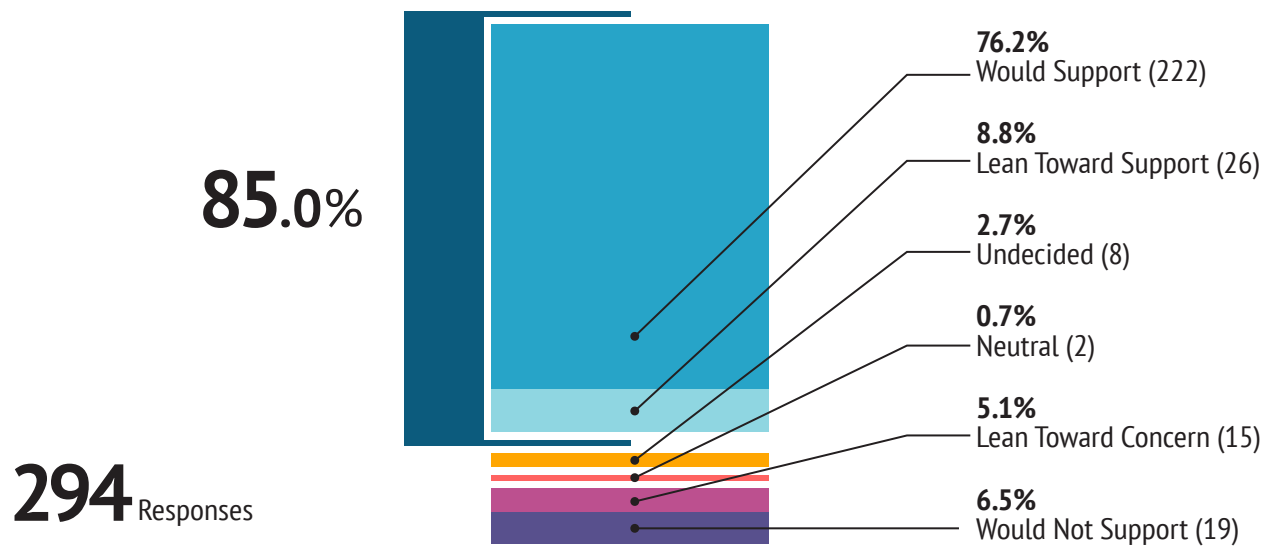
112 email addresses are shared between members

296 Total Responses

226 Online Survey Responses
70 Printed Survey Responses

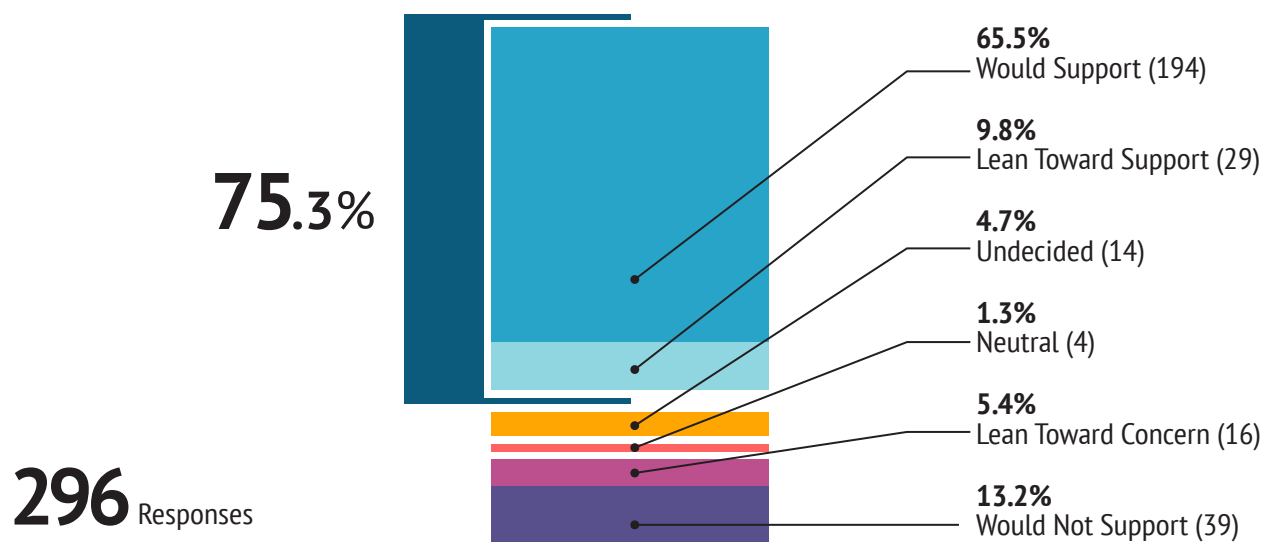
Question 1

If you were asked to vote today, how do you feel about Atonement revising our Welcome Statement with the proposed changes?



Question 2

If you were asked to vote today, how do you feel about Atonement becoming a Reconciling in Christ partner congregation?



I would support & I would lean toward support

Additional

For the previous two questions – if your preferred response was not listed, or if you have an additional response or request to share with the congregation to help us **better see and hear each other**, please include it here:

Let's welcome everyone to Atonement — to learn, grow and praise God.

I like the idea of a noisy offering being used to support RIC.

As a reflective person and wanting to be better at understanding how our words and actions affect others who are not like myself. I want to thank you for taking me on this journey of knowledge about why we need to make these important changes to our welcome statement. I had not always looked at our current statement as “outdated”. However, through your dedication you have made me see the need. I am excited to have the new statement as our foundation. Peace and blessings!

I like the changes added to the Welcome Statement. The new words better articulate the people we are called to welcome.

I would love for Atonement to be a Reconciling in Christ community. It would make inviting my LGBTQ+ friends and family to church a lot easier and would help them to feel welcomed and safe.

Under “You Are Welcome Here,” gender is crossed out. Are you considering gender as just a subset of gender identity. To me they're a little bit different. Under the 3rd paragraph, “working for racial equity, justice, and peace is included but why is gender, sexual equity and other LGBTQA+ terms not a part of this commitment?

I find it odd that we are adding “working for racial equity, justice, and peace.” This feels exclusionary to me because of the word “racial.” I think we should be working for all equity, justice, and peace, not just for racial equity, justice, and peace, but that is what this phrase grammatically says. I think it is sad that RIC forces us to add this exclusionary language to our welcome statement.

Each and every one of us is welcome at Atonement. I pray for all of us to be open minded and see both or multiple sides. The word division or divided concerns me. Focus on God, Family and Truth. Be kind to all even if you don't agree with them.

Thank you for this hard work. It is time for us to declare a Welcome to those that have been marginalized.

I would support & I would lean toward support

We are all children of God. To exclude anyone from knowing and experiencing God's love for us makes no sense. I believe strongly that we should embrace the RIC program and the revised welcoming statement.

Glad I didn't miss this. I thought we were already an RIC church. I was disappointing when I realized we are not. I thought we had already made the decision. We should be one.

Jesus welcomed all. He did not judge anyone's choices but rather showed grace, mercy, and forgiveness. If we truly are to follow Jesus we must treat all the way he did. I truly believe if he were walking on earth he would not condemn or look down on any person for their race, gender expressions, abilities or anything else. Let's put our words into action and be like Jesus.

I have been a member here for over 30 years. I do not want to leave Atonement, but if these changes are not made it will be difficult for me to worship here.

There is no such thing as being privately affirming. If you claim to be someone's ally but aren't getting hit by the stones thrown at them, you're not standing close enough.

The ELCA church accepts anyone who walks through our doors, without questions, to have a relationship with Christ. That is the goal of the ELCA. That includes those who are racist, see the LGBTQ community as frightening or going against God's will, different political views, etc. We welcome them in community to form relationships with other members and learn from each other. One's salvation isn't dependent on the extent of their inclusiveness. . In other words, I would like to see confirmation in the Welcoming Statement that includes those who don't agree with RIC.

My husband & I joined because of the sermons and assumed Atonement was already RIC.

Atonement Council & pastoral leaders have done a good job with this current process. Very informative & very considerate of all members, truly listening to each other. I am very hopeful that Atonement will become RIC & move forward, as is our tradition, as an inclusive, welcoming community of faith.

I would support & I would lean toward support

Additional

For the previous two questions – if your preferred response was not listed, or if you have an additional response or request to share with the congregation to help us **better see and hear each other**, please include it here:

We need to support our calling to love our neighbors!

I'm glad to see Atonement taking steps toward becoming an RIC congregation and, hopefully, giving the congregation a chance to decide. While our welcome statement has said for years that we are a welcoming and inclusive church, I don't think we have fully lived into that yet. Saying we are welcoming is one thing, but when that does not always match what people actually experience, it can feel untrue and even hurtful.

It can be disappointing for someone to come to Atonement expecting diversity and inclusion, only to find that is not always the reality. It is also painful when visitors or members feel welcomed by some but then encounter others who say or do things that make them feel unwelcome.

I wish Atonement leadership would listen more closely to people who are marginalized because of sexual orientation, race, gender, or other factors when they share what is truly needed to feel safe and included, rather than dismissing them and making incorrect assumptions. Becoming an RIC congregation would allow Atonement to finally embrace who we have been saying we are in our welcome statement for nearly two decades.

If Atonement wants to be a church that is sustainable for the long term and remains relevant to the next generation of those seeking to grow in their relationship with Christ, then it is time to become an RIC congregation.

Too many congregations say that all are welcome, but if it's not named specifically and intentionally, people know it's just a "I want to feel good " welcome. Welcoming in the way of Jesus means that we take risks, drop judgment and see ourselves on a journey together where our purpose is to walk together and love each other. Being a Reconciling in Christ congregation says something powerful about how we see ourselves in God's world.

I believe it is important in these days to be clear about the welcome of the gospel and what it means to follow the way of Jesus. I appreciate the congregation's willingness to step into this bold and compassionate work to embrace all God's beloved. Thank you.

If you believe excluding people, any people, is what this place is about...you're in the wrong place

Adopting the updated welcome statement and becoming an RIC congregation is an important turning point for the church. It gives us the opportunity to put our values into action and say, "We are committed to being a place where God's love is for everyone — fully, visibly, and without condition."

I would support & I would lean toward support

I struggle a bit with this question, but would support it if the wider congregation would like to move forward with it.

The reason is I come from a place of employment where there was a "support community" created for almost every group - LGBT, Pacific Islanders, etc., etc. Each of those groups held meetings and events which primarily only those folks who identified with that group attended. As more and more of these groups were created, in my opinion it seemed to further divide us rather than creating a more inclusive and cohesive body. I am reminded of the following scripture:

1 Corinthians 12:12: "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ."

I would ask the question - what are we as a congregation still are not doing that are making people (any and all people) feel excluded? If having a sign on our door/logo on our website, etc. that says we are a RIC church is the only reason someone feels safe coming through our doors, it seems we have more work to do as a congregation.

I also think about all of the other "groups" of people (BIPOC and others) and will we need to address more and more of them individually in the future, rather than focusing on serving and welcoming all of God's people as broken sinners regardless of race, creed, sexual orientation, etc.

If we're essentially already "doing" the things that a RIC congregation would do other than sending support and putting up a welcome sign/using the RIC logo, etc., I wonder why we need to do that.

Again, I would support how the wider congregation would like to proceed with this, I just hope and pray it does not serve to create divisions within the body of Christ. To that end I would support providing funds to RIC via a noisy offering or special fund drive vs. having any funding come from the General Fund of the church.

I support RIC but I'm afraid I have fatigue on the issue. There are so many issues in the nation and the church right now, its overwhelming. If we have passionate people who also carry compassion for those that are more hesitant to adopt, and they want to do the work to see it through, I support them.

Jesus loves You and Me.

It's all about the Love of Jesus, the Father, and the Holy Spirit, allowing the Trinity into our Hearts.
Loving and Respecting all of God's children is the way.
In Jesus's name I Pray. Amen.

This is a heavy lift. We need everyone's help, prayers, and hearts.

Undecided & Neither support nor oppose

Q1: revising our Welcome Statement

If neutral, would something move you towards support or concern? If undecided, I would appreciate more:

What impact does the welcome statement have on the strategic plan for the church?

Is the ELCA attempting to outdo COR?

Undecided & Neither support nor oppose

Q2: becoming Reconciling in Christ

If neutral, would something move you towards support or concern? If undecided, I would appreciate more:

If there have been discussions of any program/worship/changes as a result of use of destination?

I don't really care, just have vote so we can move on.

I am resigned to watching the outcome and seeing what happens.

Additional

For the previous two questions – if your preferred response was not listed, or if you have an additional response or request to share with the congregation to help us **better see and hear each other**, please include it here:

My personal concern is, as a long time member of several Lutheran churches I see little or NO ATTENTION paid to shut-ins such as me. I don't drive and I have significant mobility issues. It would be nice to actually have a pastor reach out occasionally. Even though I contribute annually, I feel like a forgotten person. If that's the "new" ELCA Lutheran church, it is what it is. Maybe time for me to do some reconsidering?

I would lean toward support**Q1: revising our Welcome Statement**

If concerned or undecided, I would appreciate more:

It is too long. 2nd paragraph could be eliminated. This should be a given.

Second paragraph - All churches do this

I would lean toward concern**Q2: becoming Reconciling in Christ**

If concerned or undecided, I would appreciate more:

I would need assurance that general funds are not used to fund RIC.

Not needed - we are welcoming - this is partisan politics and divisive.

Additional

For the previous two questions – if your preferred response was not listed, or if you have an additional response or request to share with the congregation to help us **better see and hear each other**, please include it here:

I believe that as Lutherans, we should support individual opinions and interpretations of the scripture. This move, while maybe making some groups feel “safer,” may also make others feel more alienated. Primary goal is to keep the church together. I also do not support the requirement to fund the ReconcilingWorks program (I realize it does not require a specific \$\$ amount).

I think our mission statement for inclusion is sufficient but supporting another organization when our current resources are limited is not a good idea. If the idea is to bring in more people to our church, it might make more sense to consider the type of worship service which is more modern and likely to attract members of all backgrounds.

I would lean toward concern**Q1: revising our Welcome Statement**

If concerned or undecided, I would appreciate more:

Why use the limiting words “working for racial equity”? Why not just a more encompassing wording by just saying working for equality? There are many human conditions where equality is a goal for our work for justice. i.e racial equality, economic equality, educational equality, etc. I acknowledge that this change meets an RIC requirement in order to get their certification. But I wonder if we weren't considering making a change to our welcome statement just to meet these requirements, we might do better.

I would lean toward support**Q2: becoming Reconciling in Christ**

If concerned or undecided, I would appreciate more:

I support all the goals of the RIC program. I have issues with the organization itself. I felt the presentation by the representative of RIC was more about that person and his personal journey. He provided no more insight than what could be read on their website.

I would like to hear more about what Atonement's plans are going forward to promote inclusivity and live out the goals of a RIC congregation so this is more than a badge we put on our website or on our door.

I would not support**Q1: revising our Welcome Statement**

If concerned or undecided, I would appreciate more:

I think the statement is fine as it is. I've thought so for a long time and it covers the RIC question.

I would support**Q2: becoming Reconciling in Christ**

If concerned or undecided, I would appreciate more:

The synod is already supporting RIC.

I would lean toward concern & I would not support

Q1: revising our Welcome Statement

If concerned or undecided, I would appreciate more:

Conversation on the verbiage of "working for racial equity, justice, and peace" and whether adhering to language more in line with the ELCA constitution better suited.

Agree w/ 1st two changes. Disagree w/ 2nd two changes. Would be OK to use wording from our existing constitution C4.03.f on purple sheet.

"You are welcome here" is OK
"physical and mental ability" is OK
the other statements are not OK

"All" or "everyone" would be preferable. "You" seems too exclusionary, because what comes next is "not you." I also do not in any way support putting flags and other LGB.... signs around the church or printed or other media. Next we'll have to start posting other "groups" insignia as well. Where does it end? Keep what we have.

We're past issues of contention. Give reasons on why one might join. i.e. a place of grace by quoting something say, they would not otherwise hear are know, or to why we practice our faith as Lutherans. Finally, there will always be a need for inclusion, like those who have been incarcerated. Are they not welcome?

I would lean toward concern & I would not support

Q2: becoming Reconciling in Christ

If concerned or undecided, I would appreciate more:

Not in favor of the church creating another expense stream to the national RIC program.

Too political leaning. I'm not against equality for all but feel this aligns outside of the core ELCA roots.

No non-profit organization should be writing or making suggests as to who are welcome.

Come join us, All are welcome.

If this passes, I would have to consider finding a different church.

Additional

For the previous two questions – if your preferred response was not listed, or if you have an additional response or request to share with the congregation to help us **better see and hear each other**, please include it here:

1. You are no longer welcoming to all, if all members must adopt RIC (if voted in).
2. One (or specific) groups should not be promoted above others – risk alienating others.
3. Church has lost it's way focusing on this one primary issue – an unnecessary label.

All are welcome, needs to be a "feel good" statement. Not the picking of words that make US feel good.

Suggest greeters, give a flower (or somethings that shows our appreciation) to/for those who are first time visitors.

Regarding the Welcome Statement: (a) DOES make sense to replace "All are welcome" to "You are welcome" (b) "physical, mental and emotional condition" seems appropriate and accurate as is, "physical and mental ability" seems more limiting and unnecessary – why highlight "ability" (who's to decide someone's "ability"?) when "condition" covers all "abilities?" (c) "gender identity and expression" is (unlike the other listed personal attributes) unnecessarily polarizing, implying the particular value judgement of "this is right and good." Agreement is not necessary to be welcoming. (d): "working for racial equity, justice, and peace." "Equity" (as opposed to "equality") is a trigger DEI term meaning striving for equal outcomes by any means - including addressing perceived racism with racism.

Regarding RIC: RIC advocates for validating and promoting LGBTQIA+ ideology with which many disagree. Their political campaigning is subtle, but comes out e.g., with their objections to "anti-LGBTQIA+" legislation with which many in our congregation agree, esp youth-transitioning, parental notification, title-9 girls in sports, etc. Many would have difficulty supporting a church which so directly supports an organization which campaigns beliefs in direct conflict with their own. Even IF I totally agreed with RIC's advocacy efforts and LGBTQIA+ ideology, I would still object to establishing RIC (or ANY similar political/social/ideological organization) partnership. Doing so indicates to many current and prospective new members that that we don't accept or respect opposing viewpoints, that we only want to welcome those who "sign-on" to what the church's leadership and designated and right vs. wrong, sin vs. good.

Additionally,

As part of gathering all voices and perspectives from the congregation to help us **better see and hear each other**, below is a letter to the Congregation in opposition of becoming a Reconciling in Christ partner congregation. It was available on the website during the survey, but may not have been seen by all. We are including it with the survey responses as part of the conversation.

<https://www.atoneluth.org/welcome-journey-voices>

Opposing ALC-RIC Partnership

Reconciling in Christ (RIC) is about welcoming and beliefs. The objection by some ALC members to establishing ALC-RIC partnership is the implication that acceptance of and agreement with its beliefs is required to be truly welcoming to people who share and/or live by those beliefs.

Opponents to ALC-RIC partnership see many of RIC's positions and advocacy on LGBTQIA+ ideology as political action and influence which inappropriately proclaims overall member support and agreement with those positions. This can negate "acceptance of all" for members and/or prospective members who hold valid scriptural, ethical, or political reasons for disagreement with some RIC positions. They may likely no longer feel welcome or accepted by our church if RIC partnership was put in place, explicitly supporting initiatives or political legislation with which they strongly disagree. (e.g., RIC opposes so-called "Anti-LGBTQIA+" legislation initiatives, which are often supported by a portion of ALC members.) An additional common concern is the effect RIC endorsement would have on the youth of our congregation. RIC congregations have been prominent in national meetings for youth, where pro-LGBTQIA+ education and activities have been presented and promoted. RIC opponents consider it inappropriate to market and endorse these ideologies to youth in our church.

While opposing RIC partnership, they believe Christ's church should actively welcome varying scriptural interpretation lending individual guidance to social constructs around right/good vs. wrong/sin. Previously proposed RIC association and passionate debates have demonstrated risk of failing to do this, resulting in some significant member departures. This view is that we should resist the temptation to associate with ANY one-sided political advocacy organization, and continue to find alternate, effective solutions to ensuring Christ's church is truly a welcoming sanctuary.

Common ground includes the belief that effort should include emphasizing underserved groups identified as having suffering historical discrimination and underrepresentation, and many in opposition to RIC partnership DO support many of its member requirements, e.g., expanding public welcoming statements to include more explicit highlight of groups whose members may feel "All are welcome" doesn't really apply to them, and/or accepting LGBTQIA+ members into congregation leadership. They believe the goal of welcoming LGBTQIA+ can be achieved by continuing and expanding real actions of outreach and personal engagement, while still remaining honest about our political differences. We're been able to do this successfully around many other divisive social-political disagreements (pro-life vs. pro-choice, Israel vs. Palestinians, non-documented immigrant integration vs. deportation, etc.).

To the members of Atonement Lutheran Church,

Having met in conference to review the survey results and perspectives from the congregation, our recommendation from the Church Council is to move forward in calling the two survey questions to a congregational vote.

We have chosen to provide you with all the feedback received on this Welcome Journey Conversations Survey, allowing for every voice and statement to be shared and represented, not to persuade each other in order to arrive at a consensus, but to **help us more clearly see and hear each other** – our diverse perspectives that come from the beautiful quilt of experiences at Atonement.

As you read these comments, knowing you will agree with some & disagree with others, we ask you to consider them respectfully, not so that another's opinion might make sense to you, but so you might better understand why an opinion makes sense to them.

Our hope is that, by having bridge-building conversations, we might close the gap in this divided world, because the strength of a bridge lies in people, not ideas. "The most important thing about a bridge isn't that it's crossed, but that it's there. That it exists and is maintained so that one day, when someone who's been nervous is ready, it can hold their weight, carry their truth, and expand their world." (M. Guzmán, *I Never Thought of It That Way*, 2022, p. 47)

Recommended for congregational action:

Motion to Amend Continuing Resolution [C8.01.A13] Statement of Welcome and Affirmation of the Atonement Lutheran Church Constitution

Recommended by the Atonement Church Council on October 23, 2025.

To adopt that the Constitution of Atonement Lutheran Church, with Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions, be amended in Continuing Resolution [C8.01.A13] Statement of Welcome and Affirmation by the four changes presented to the congregation in the Welcome Journey Conversations updating the language for gender identity and expression, physical and mental ability, and committing to racial equity, justice, and peace.

Motion to Become a Reconciling in Christ Congregation

Recommended by the Atonement Church Council on October 23, 2025.

Provided the amendment to Continuing Resolution [C8.01.A13] Statement of Welcome and Affirmation of the Constitution of Atonement Lutheran Church is adopted, to further provide clarity on the public commitment to living as a welcoming faith community, to adopt that Atonement Lutheran Church become a Reconciling in Christ congregation.
