

Resolution on Education and Resources for the NW Synod of Wisconsin on LGBTQIA+ Conversation

WHEREAS, scripture declares, “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (*John 13:34*, NRSV); and as the Psalmist writes, “I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” (*Psalms 139:14*, NRSV); and

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America clearly proclaim that “this church, in faithfulness to the Gospel, is committed to be an inclusive church in the midst of division in society,” and that “the congregations, synods, and churchwide units of this church shall seek to exhibit the inclusive unity that is God’s will for the Church” (5.01b); and

WHEREAS, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and in the name of Jesus, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin share an ongoing commitment to justice in the world and communities in which we live, including advocacy work alongside people from historically marginalized communities; and

WHEREAS, in baptism without stipulations or conditions we have been made new; and through communion, the very sacraments that proclaim that same unconditional grace to the world, we find ourselves united as many different members of the one body of Christ; and

WHEREAS, while the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin acknowledges that some congregations, bound by their conscience, will choose not to participate in the conversation about becoming a Reconciling in Christ congregation; and

WHEREAS, for individuals who identify as transgender: up to 43% have attempted suicide, and 66% of transgender youth have engaged in self-harm; and

WHEREAS, for individuals who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, or asexual (LGBTQIA+¹): they are two times as likely to attempt suicide, and 30%-70% of LGBTQIA+ students experience verbal and/or physical assaults in school; and

WHEREAS, for clergy candidates who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex or asexual in the ELCA, it can take years to find a call; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin shall, in faithfulness to the gospel, invite and encourage at least 25% of congregations to intentionally discuss the process of what it means to become a Reconciling In Christ congregation by the end of 2022, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the congregations who choose to engage in this conversation will have their rostered leaders share with the bishop in their annual reports the progress of these conversations, and; be it further

¹ + indicates the spectrum of gender and orientations not specifically listed. The other parts of the acronym name the following types of sexualities and genders: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual/Aromantic.

RESOLVED, that the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin curate and provide materials to assist congregations and rostered leaders in the call process so that they can be educated and have assistance on how to be open and welcoming to calling pastors of every sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and sexual identity, should they choose to do so.

Submitted by the NW Synod Gender and Sexuality Justice Group, the NW Synod Justice Team, and the NW Synod Council.