

WHY RIC?

Reconciling In Christ advocates for the full welcome,
inclusion, and quality for ALL Lutherans as equal
members in the family of Christ.



“We are all created equal in the image of God, all ‘one in Christ.’” Galatians 3:28

Members of English Lutheran’s Reconciling In Christ (RIC) Team answer... “Why do you feel called to serve on the RIC Team?”



Michael

I am involved because an RIC church supports the inclusion of everyone - black, brown, indigenous, LGBTQ+ and other - as equal members in the Church's beloved community. Each of us bears the image of the divine - each of us is a 'treasure in earthen vessels.' (2 Corinthians 4:7) We advocate to end discrimination in all forms as we move forward to build a more inclusive church based on the Gospel message of equality and love.

Deb

“Why do we need to become an RIC congregation? We have always been welcoming!” The truth is that if you are an individual from a marginalized group such as LGBTQIA+, racial or ethnic minority, of differing ability or lower class -- you are not sure if you would be welcomed. Churches, along with many other social institutions, have historically excluded certain groups. By becoming an RIC congregation, ELC would make public proclamation that anyone is welcomed here as equal members in the family of Christ. No one would need to wonder if it would be alright to worship at ELC. Becoming RIC will let ELC truly live its mission to “welcome, worship and work in the world.”

Jon

I am involved with the RIC Team because this is a way for us to affirm English Lutheran's intentional commitment to welcome ALL people to our church community. The RIC journey helps each of us to examine our own values and understanding of inclusivity.

Peggy

When I was young, it was plain to see that women were not equal members of our society, or the church. Even though I experienced gender discrimination, it was well tempered with my white middle class privilege. Even so, I feel the need to use this experience in gender-based bias to see the ways in which I discriminate against others and to fight that discrimination. I have rejoiced with every step we have made as a congregation and a denomination, first with opening the path for women to be fully ordained pastors, and again, when we moved to accept the gifts of our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters. I feel it's time to stop doing this work piecemeal – one group of the marginalized at a time – and just declare as loudly as we can that we were all created by God to be who we are, and celebrate the diversity of our God's family.

Kathy

The concept of 'Welcome' seems so simple, yet also complex. I know what I feel when I'm welcomed, but I need to discover more about what this might mean to others who have been marginalized, unwelcomed, and shamed because they were seen as different. What would 'Welcome' look and feel like to those who have had such sad experiences from 'church'? Loving one another and welcoming the stranger are at the heart of Jesus' message, and also when I hear that it's written in the Quran that God made us different so that we would seek to understand and know one another, I hope that's where our RIC journey can lead us at ELC.

We were not the first people to live in these lands. As an emerging RIC congregation it is more than appropriate that we acknowledge those indigenous peoples who occupied these lands as original people. This sacred land acknowledgement was offered at our worship services as part of Indigenous Peoples Day last October. Please reflect, pray, and share it with others.

"My Father's lodge has room for everyone." John 14:2
(1st Nations Version - Indigenous translation of the New Testament)

We occupy the original, unceded ancestral and traditional lands of the Ocheti Sakowin, Meskwaki (Sauk & Fox), Wahpeton, and Ho Chunk Peoples. We give thanks for their presence here and wish to recognize and honor all our indigenous siblings and essential relations who have and continue to call these lands their home. We acknowledge the original indigenous peoples whose creation stories are rooted in these lands. We work to dismantle the ongoing impact and legacy of settler colonialism and frontier mythology through dialogue and engagement in order to repair the harmful exclusions, erasures, and destruction of indigenous peoples and their sacred lands. We honor those who were the first to love, grow, celebrate, cry, drum and sing upon these lands and places where we are now living. **We pray for reconciliation, harmony, beauty, and peace.**

**Pastor
Mark
Kvale**

Reconciling Works; the Lutheran movement that is helping congregations become RIC congregations, names the following as their vision, mission and values:

- Vision: To keep expanding the welcome, liberating those who are forced to live in the margins. To keep dismantling barriers and building bridges. To keep working until all of God's beloved have equity.
- Mission: Reconciling Works advocates for the acceptance, full participation, and liberation of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions within the Lutheran Church.
- Values: 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.

As a pastor, as a person who strives to follow in the way of Jesus, I am keenly aware of how the above vision, mission and values align with the Word; what our scriptures say about who God is in Jesus, and who we are as children of God.

In Genesis, we read that as God is creating, God sees all that God has made and calls it, not just good, but very good. (Genesis 1.31)

The psalmist speaks to this goodness in Psalm 139: For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well.

God's love for all is expressed so beautifully in the Gospel of John: For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

In the book of Acts, Peter encounters others who previously would have been considered outside of God's love. Peter encounters a vision of Jesus who tells him (and us) that what he has called clean we should not call profane.

The lens of God's unending, unconditional, all-encompassing love shown in Jesus is the lens through which I read and understand God's word; Word that compels me as a pastor to do all I can to help make sure that the inclusive embrace of the congregations I serve include all people, fully. Simply put: because we are all children of God.