

## **Reconciling In Christ (RIC) Proposed Statement and History of our Process**

### **First Lutheran's Proposed RIC Welcome Statement:**

*Walking together in God's love, we rejoice in the diversity of God's wonderfully made children. We celebrate lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, and non-binary people and all members of our human family regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, race, ethnicity, age, marital status, physical and mental ability, faith history, economic status, education, family configuration, or immigration status. We renounce the sin of racism and all forms of discrimination. We welcome all to join us in worship, leadership, participation in rites and sacraments of the church, and fellowship on our journey of nurturing faith, doing justice, and serving all.*

### **Notes:**

- If we vote to become a *Reconciling in Christ* Congregation, we join with hundreds of others in the ELCA who have chosen to do so. We then are added to a database that is used by many people when seeking a congregation.
- In order for our welcome statement to meet the criteria set forth by Reconciling Works, (the organization that oversees the Reconciling in Christ process), it needs to be explicit in our welcome of LGBTQIA+ persons and be explicit in naming our commitment to address the sin of systemic racism.
- If we vote to become a *Reconciling in Christ* Congregation, we agree to:
  - Support Reconciling Works financially with an annual gift (\$500 of Local Benevolence Funds will be used in 2023)
  - Make our welcome statement public (it will be included on our Web site and potentially elsewhere)
  - Be open to calling an LGBTQIA+ and Black, Brown, Indigenous, Person of Color rostered leader and allow community space to be used for LGBTQIA+ weddings
  - Commit to continue addressing issues of inclusion and racism
- In place of LGBTQIA+, the writing team chose to spell out the full words for the purpose of ongoing education.
- What's next? In the next 1-2 months, a team will be formed to address how we live into our new welcome statement and how we better make public our welcome.

See Next Page for a Review of the Process that led us to this moment.

## RIC Process:

1. We as a church council had planned on beginning this process in 2020, but when the pandemic hit, we chose to wait until a time when face-to-face (and hybrid) conversations were possible.
2. In the Fall of 2022, there were several adult forums devoted to this process and the crafting of a welcome statement. These forums, facilitated by Vicar Samantha DiBiaso, were all accessible in person or on-line via Zoom. At the adult forum on October 9, we welcomed guest presenter, the Director of Program & Engagement for Reconciling Works, Ashlei Buhrow. Links to resources about the process, and the importance of it, were shared in newsletters and "This Week" e-news.
3. From those who participated, a writing team was formed in October. A first draft of a welcome statement was shared with the congregation in mid-November and was discussed at an adult forum on November 20 where feedback was given. The feedback was taken into account and a final draft of a statement was shared with the congregation in the January 2023 newsletter and via "This Week" e-news. The writing team includes: Isabella van der Weide (principal writer), Emily Citrone, Vicar Samantha DiBiaso, Signe Johns, Britta McNemar, Paul and Susan Pintus, Cathy Sukow, and Leslie Waters.