

Statements of Welcome from Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod Congregations

Arndt's Lutheran Church, Easton (RIC):

Motion that Arndt's Lutheran Church become a Reconciling in Christ congregation. This means that ALL people are welcome here at Arndt's regardless of lifestyle, sexual orientation and gender identity. We will offer hospitality to all of God's children.

Zion United Lutheran Church, Brodheadsville (RIC):

*There is no longer Jew or Greek,
there is no longer slave or free,
there is no longer male and female;
for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.*

Galatians 3:28

At Zion United Lutheran Church, we believe that God's grace is for all people and that everyone is welcome through our doors. Marty Haugen's hymn "All Are Welcome" sums up for us the kind of church we strive to be:

*Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safely live,
a place where saints and children tell how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions,
rock of faith and vault of grace;
here the love of Christ shall end divisions:
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.*

Our world is a place of brokenness and alienation. Jesus calls us to wholeness and reconciliation. As disciples of Jesus, we seek justice and healing among people. We are aware that gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons are often scorned by society and have been excluded from membership in some congregations. At Zion United Lutheran Church, we wish to make known our caring and concern and we welcome all people regardless of sex, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical or mental ability or disability, age, or station in life. We affirm that each person is God's unique creation and by God's grace, each is called a child of God.

All are welcome at Zion United Lutheran Church:

Welcome to worship . . .

Welcome to receive the sacraments . . .

Welcome to participate in the fellowship of membership . . .

Welcome to join in serving our neighbors in need . . .

Welcome to share the love of Christ with all the world . . .

Welcome to strive to live together as a reconciling people.

All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit, Emmaus (RIC):

“All are welcome; all are welcome, in this place.” These words are the chorus to a hymn from our worship book, but they also capture the vision of the church we hold here at the Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit. We intentionally seek to be a welcoming, inclusive and inviting community of Christians.

As a “Reconciling in Christ” congregation, our faith community welcomes all people regardless of sexual orientation, gender identities, race or ethnic background. All who seek to know and serve Jesus Christ are welcome. It’s as simple as that! “All are Welcome, in this place” ...You are welcome!!!!

St. John Lutheran Church, Allentown (RIC):

We are a community of Christians, open to all,
empowered by faith in Jesus Christ
to make the Gospel visible by nurturing one another
and all whose lives we touch.

We value the rich diversity among God’s people –
race, culture, sexual orientation, age, gifts, and abilities –
and we welcome all people into our life and ministry.

St. John Lutheran Church, Easton (RIC):

There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:28.

As a community of God striving to be open to all people, we at St. Johns Lutheran Congregation believe that the gospel is God’s gift to all people, to be shared unconditionally. We welcome all to join us as we struggle to better understand the mysteries of God’s teachings. We are challenged by Christ to care for, to love, to understand, and to listen to each other, regardless of race, age, gender, marital status, physical and mental abilities, sexual / affectional orientation, national origin or economic status. We celebrate together our unity as God’s people. St John’s Lutheran Congregation is a place for each person to shine in their own unique gifts.

St. Peter Lutheran Church, Bethlehem (RIC):

All are called to God's feast. As a Reconciling in Christ congregation, we who have experienced God's all-inclusive love invite you to come as you are.

We welcome people of any age, race, ethnic background, gender identity, sexual orientation, education, physical or mental ability, or marital, parental, or social status to join us as full participants in the life of St. Peter's.

Trinity Lutheran Church, Reading (RIC):

As a community of the people of God, we are called to minister to all people of our world, knowing that the world is often an unloving place. Our world is a place of alienation and brokenness. Christ calls us to reconciliation and wholeness. We are challenged by the Gospel to be agents of healing within our society.

We affirm with the apostle Paul that in Christ “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female” (Galatians 3:28). Christ has made us one. We acknowledge this reconciliation extends also to those whose affectional orientation is toward a person of the same gender.

Because gay and lesbian persons are often scorned by society and alienated from the Church, we wish to make known our caring and concern. It is for this purpose that we affirm the following:

- that gay and lesbian people share with all others the worth that comes from being unique individuals created by God;
- that gay and lesbian people are welcome within the membership of this congregation upon making the same affirmation of faith that all other people make; and
- that as members of the congregation, gay and lesbian people are expected and encouraged to share the sacramental and general life of this congregation.

Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod (RIC):

Resolved, that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America make known its caring and concern for gays and lesbians and their families by affirming:

- that gay and lesbian people share with all others the worth that comes from being individuals created by God and for whom Christ died; and
- that gay and lesbian people are welcome within the life and mission of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod; and
- that as members of this Synod, gay and lesbian people are expected and encouraged to share in all aspects of this Synod's mission consistent with ELCA policy.

Lutheran Youth Fellowship (RIC):

Whereas, all individuals regardless of any circumstances including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and background shall be welcomed openly into the Lutheran Youth Fellowship, therefore be it

Resolved, that the Lutheran Youth Fellowship makes no distinction for or against the actions/practices of the previously stated persons, be it further

Resolved, that the assembly direct the Secretary of the Lutheran Youth Fellowship of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod to forward a copy of this resolution to Lutherans Concerned/North America requesting recognition as a Reconciling in Christ organization.

The following congregation has developed a statement of welcome but has not yet become an official RIC congregation:

St. James Lutheran Church, Coopersburg:

We at St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church extend to every person a Christ-inspired welcome. As a family of Christians we strive to reflect God's unconditional love for everyone.

St. James welcomes all people, including those who have been excluded because of cultural or ethnic background, race, physical or mental ability, socioeconomic or family status, age, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

We recognize the blessings of diversity and celebrate the uniqueness of all who worship here. We welcome all people as full participants in the life of this congregation.