

RIC (Reconciling in Christ) Survey Results and FAQ's

The results of the RIC Pre-Vote Survey have been tallied. Over 92 percent of those who responded to the survey support becoming an RIC congregation and using the new welcome statement. We celebrate this good news!

The team would like to respond to some questions that were raised on the survey.

1. Our current welcome statement already says everyone is welcome. Why do we have to change it?

The RIC organization has updated their guidelines and requires certain phrases to be included in welcome statements. To be recognized as an RIC Partner, faith communities must clearly state a welcome to people of “all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions” *and* name its commitment to “racial equity.” By including these words and phrases, our new statement shows that Good Soil is a faith community that is publicly committed to living as a welcoming and affirming faith community to all.

2. How can I access more scriptural engagement resources on this topic?

Information about the “clobber passages” used to defend LGBTQIA+ bias can be found in the presentation that The Rev. Dr. Eric Bodestab of Trinity Lutheran Church in Kent, Ohio, gave at Good Soil. The slides for that presentation will be shared again in upcoming editions of our e-news, or you can request your own copy from the church office by emailing admin@goodsoillutheran.org. The Reconciling in Christ website also has resources you can access here: <https://www.reconcilingworks.org/resources/>

Additionally, the theological conviction that “homosexuality is a sin” is based on an incorrect translation of scripture. This error is documented in the movie *1946: The Mistranslation that Shifted Culture*. If you were unable to attend the screening of this documentary here at Good Soil, you can watch it online <https://www.1946themovie.com/> for a nominal fee. The film follows the story of researchers who trace the origins of the anti-gay movement among Christians to a grave mistranslation of the Bible in 1946. It chronicles the discovery of never-before-seen archives at Yale University which unveil astonishing new revelations, and it casts significant doubt on any biblical basis for LGBTQIA+ prejudice.

3. If the ELCA already is an affirming denomination, and our synod encourages congregations to send queer and/or people of color as additional delegates (optional 3rd delegate) to the synod assembly, why is the RIC designation necessary?

Not all ELCA churches are affirming. Only 12 percent of all ELCA institutions (synods, congregations, seminaries, schools, and campus ministries) have worked to earn the RIC designation. The Northeastern Ohio Synod does not hold the RIC designation as an affirming synod. When non-affirming churches say they are welcoming, how does a member of the LGBTQIA+ community know if that welcome is really for them? The

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RIC designation is a sign—like a church nametag—that indicates safety and an unequivocal welcome for LGBTQIA+ people and people of color. RIC maintains an online listing of churches that have earned this designation to help people find a church home where they will be accepted without conditions or judgement.

That is the kind of community we are building at Good Soil. We will always be a Jesus-centered church. We will always believe that all of God's children are beloved. We will always be centered on the greatest commandments Jesus gave us:

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind and your neighbor as yourself.

(Matthew 22:36-40, Mark 12:30-31, and Luke 10:27)

The date of our RIC vote will be shared in the coming weeks. Thank you for your prayers and engagement!

Good Soil's RIC Team

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Good Soil's Updated Welcome Statement

(unanimously approved by GSLM council and RIC Team)

Reflecting the abundant welcome of the Kingdom of God as revealed by Jesus,
Good Soil Lutheran Ministries welcomes all who seek God's love and grace.

We affirm and celebrate the diversity of humanity in all its races, cultures, sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions, social and economic circumstances, abilities, and disabilities. Together, we commit ourselves to racial equity and to justice for all, because in God's kingdom, we are all beloved children of God.