



The Reconciling in Christ Team a group of members (primarily: Suzanne Terry, Celene Welch, Nathan Graham, Chris Clarkson, and Pastor John Bell). We have been meeting over the last year, asked by the Congregation Council to explore whether it is time for Christ The Servant Lutheran church to be formally recognized as a 'Reconciling in Christ' (RIC) church. An RIC church is one that proclaims itself to be welcoming and inclusive to people of all sexual orientations (LGBTQIA+ people).

As we continue on this journey, we will be hosting conversation with all members so we reach an answer to whether we, as a body of believers, wish to become an RIC congregation. This is a significant decision. A decision which will flow from the faith we have. This faith is grounded in the Biblical story

## Biblical Support for Inclusivity

### Part One

In preparation for our upcoming congregational conversations in discernment of our participation in RIC, we would like to take a moment in this article to lift up the HOW and WHY of God's word to us: this word we call "THE BIBLE;" the Spirit filled record of HOW and WHY God speaks to us informs our decision of whether to become an RIC church.

#### The Biblical HOW

It is true that God speaks in, through and to *all things* in creation *all the time*. As we look, feel, and listen, we have come to know the manifest manner in which God speaks.

God also speaks in, through, and to *humanity* in *specific fashion*. An example of **HOW** God speaks in specific fashion is the Bible.

When it comes to the Bible {out of all the billions of people who have lived} there are very few people called to see, feel, hear and then write God's word, as found in the Bible. Then, there is another group of people {slightly greater in number} called to scribe, inscribe, and transcribe God's word down through the years. Then, another group of people {again slightly larger} called to translate, transfer, and transform God's word into other languages. And then finally, another group of people called to interpret, infer, and investigate God's word to grow in community {this group includes us

all}. God chooses to 'get the word out' in a fashion that *embraces, encourages, and engages with humanity*. In every step of the Bible coming into existence, God chose to involve humans in the process. In short: 'HOW does the Bible come into existence?' The Bible occurs because God *embraces, encourages, and engages* with us mere mortals in its construction. God's biblical 'HOW to' book, even in *THE WAY* it came into being, is an *ever widening, expanding, multiplying circle*. God chose precisely this 'HOW to', to get the Bible delivered into our

hands. God chose this way even while knowing our own 'how to' receive and share this divine message, would not always go smoothly.

Indeed, when it comes to the Bible, the human 'HOW to' does not always go smoothly. In all of the **bolded, double underlined words** in the above paragraph, we humans have not always reflected HOW God chose to give a divine message. We have not always been about *embracing, encouraging, and engaging* nor have we always been about an *ever widening, expanding, multiplying circle*.

But... but... BUT → HALLELUH !!!! This *divine HOW* has more authority than our *human HOW*. This divine HOW is the Spirit of God, the *source* of the Bible's authority.

The Spirit of God, which *embraces, encourages, engages*, is present in this holy book and not just in it, but in the very manner and history and HOW it was constructed. This ever present Spirit of the 'divine how' is why we call this book the HOLY Bible. Even when we let our 'how to' do things creep in... because we don't understand the Biblical **WHY**... the divine HOW TO do things is still **triumphant**. God's 'word' (small "w") AND God's 'Word' (large 'W') are incarnated in the same fashion: by that which is Divine being joined with that which is human.

#### The Biblical WHY

Now, when it comes to the **WHY** of the Bible, one really only has to say: "it's the same thing as the how" → *embracing, encouraging, engaging* as the Divine and human combine in an *ever widening, expanding, multiplying circle!!*

Greetings again brothers and sisters in Christ, we on the RIC team are so looking forward to hosting our future conversations.