

The Reconciling in Christ Team is a group of members (Celene Welch, Nathan Graham, Chris Clarkson, Nancy Johnson, Suzanne Terry, and Pastor John Bell) tasked to explore with the congregation whether it is time for Christ The Servant to commit to becoming a 'Reconciling in Christ' (RIC) community. An RIC church is one that proclaims itself to be welcoming and inclusive to people of all sexual orientations and gender identities (LGBTQIA+ people).

Personal Experience

By Nancy Johnson

I have been a member of CTS since 1985. I enjoy belonging to a small church and getting to know all the people in the congregation. Although we are a small church many members are active in the community. We encourage college students to participate in worship and volunteer activities. We have gained and lost members over the years. I would like to see our congregation grow.

I was asked to sign a petition to ban gay and lesbian clergy in the early 2000's. I respectfully declined and explained the reason was my brother, after receiving a Masters in Divinity in 1977, was denied ordination. He was denied because the LCA found out he was gay. Times have changed but the disappointment has never gone away.

My brother drove tour buses and everyone loved him. Tours requested him. Even though he was never ordained he used his gift to help people. He turned to the Catholic Church instead. Before he passed, he was about to become a deacon, which he truly deserved. My family always supported him. I knew that God had other plans for him.

I have other family members who are LGBTQIA+ who believe in God's welcoming arms. My parents taught me to accept people for who they are, not what we think they should be. We welcomed many foster children into our home, most are still family. We are all God's children. Our Christian celebration of communion began while Jesus celebrated Passover with his followers. In the body and blood of Jesus we are united as one. Exclusion is never our Lord's intent. May our greeting of newcomers always be open and genuine. Everyone is welcome here including people of any race. We are all humans and deserve to worship God without ridicule.

Our congregation has welcomed people from many walks of life. Being designated as RIC only lets people know they can worship here and no one will turn them away because of gender identity or racial bias.