

Caring for our Trans Community

WHEREAS, according to <https://www.lgbtmap.org/> in 2020, roughly 894000 individuals who live in the Southeastern Synod self-identify as LGBTQIA+; and

WHEREAS, according to the Trevor Project, LGBTQIA+ youth are more than four times as likely to attempt suicide than their peers; and

WHEREAS, according to the Trevor Project, LGBTQIA+ youth who felt high social support from their family reported attempting suicide at less than half the rate of those who felt low or moderate social support; and

WHEREAS, the gender spectrum recognizes that gender is not limited to just male and female categories but rather exists on a continuum with a range of identities and expressions in between; and

WHEREAS, the gender spectrum promotes inclusivity and acceptance of diverse gender identities, challenging traditional views of gender (Male and Female); and

WHEREAS, we are all made in God's image, including those in the LGBTQIA+ community, as spelled out in the Psalms, "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well." (Psalm 139:13-14); and

WHEREAS, All people have been intentionally created by God, including LGBTQIA+ people, as stated in Isaiah 43:1b, "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine"; and

WHEREAS, the Southeastern Synod is a Reconciling in Christ Synod, which declares our support of the LGBTQIA+ community; and

WHEREAS, Bishop Strickland has shared support of the LGBTQIA+ community by speaking out against anti-trans legislation in GA, AL, MS, and TN; and

WHEREAS, we are called to ensure the gracious welcome of all LGBTQIA+ individuals in all spaces, especially by using one's preferred pronouns, and names and providing safe housing at Synod-sponsored events; and

WHEREAS, those in the LGBTQIA+ community suffer from greater discrimination than most of their peers, which negatively affects one's mental and emotional health and, therefore;

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LET IT BE RESOLVED, that the use of an individual's preferred pronouns be made available on name tags for all Southeastern Synod-sponsored events; and also

LET IT BE RESOLVED, that we encourage all individuals to share their preferred pronouns when addressing the community; and also

LET IT BE RESOLVED, that the coordinators of every Southeastern Synod-sponsored event make every effort possible to provide safe housing accommodations for all LGBTQIA+ participants; and also

LET IT BE RESOLVED, that all congregations are encouraged to create and share welcome statements that include a welcome to those in the LGBTQIA+ community, and to share these statements at certain times of the year, such as Pride month (June and October); and also

LET IT BE RESOLVED, that the Synod Council send the Southeastern Synod Lutheran Youth Organization (SESLYO) "Caring For Our Trans Community Letter," which is at the end of this resolution statement, to each and every congregation of this Synod by way of congregational council presidents, pastors, and youth directors; and also

LET IT BE RESOLVED, that these letters be encouraged to be posted in a public place; and also

LET IT BE RESOLVED, that the SESLYO board encourages all congregations to reach out to groups that help churches develop outreach and welcome statements to all LGBTQIA+ individuals, like Reconciling Works (<https://www.reconcilingworks.org/>).

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The Southeastern Synod Lutheran Youth Organization (SESLYO) believes all LGBTQIA+ individuals deserve to feel loved, safe, and cared for in our churches and communities.

Since 2000 we have been a Reconciling in Christ synod. This means that we are called to welcome and support all LGBTQIA+ individuals. As the LGBTQIA+ community grows, and in following Jesus' command to love one another, we are to reach out to and welcome these individuals to our churches and communities.

Therefore, the SESLYO board asks all congregations and ministries of the Southeastern Synod to use preferred pronouns, to accommodate all LGBTQIA+ individuals with safe housing for events, and to reach out to the LGBTQIA+ community.

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We encourage all congregations to use resources like *Reconciling in Christ Ministries* to further develop welcome statements and a supportive community.

- [Reconciling in Christ Ministries \(elca-ses.org\)](https://elca-ses.org)
- [LGBTQIA+ Inclusion \(elca-ses.org\)](https://elca-ses.org)

SESLYO Signatures:

Chris Mutshipayi, Chair
Ella Dunn, Chair-Elect
Izumi Hall, Synod Council Representative
AJ Jannett, Secretary
E Martin, Director of Communications
Daniel Reed, Chaplain
Hollyn Kershner, Disabled Rep
F. N. Ferdinand, Person of Color Rep
Tim Reed, Conference 4 Rep
Evvvy Fuller, Conference 9 Rep