

# The New Humanity

*a monthly newsletter from*



St. Luke  
Lutheran Church

*JULY 2026*

The New Humanity, affectionally referred to as the "NuHu," is inspired by Ephesians 2:15: *"that Christ might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace."* This longer, monthly newsletter includes articles from staff and one committee in addition to the regular weekly announcements. May we be reminded of our New Humanity in Christ as we read and reflect together.

This month's contents:

- Featured Article from Suz
- Committee Spotlight
- From the Loft
- Zoom Corner
- Pride in the Park Thanks
- Look for Announcements on Thursday!
- Calendar



## Featured Article

**What Does it Mean to Be a Reconciling in Christ**

# (RIC) Congregation?

by Suz Snedeker

**Meaning of Words:** The full name of “Reconciling Works,” the not for profit that helps RIC congregations on their journey, is “**Reconciling Works, Lutherans for Full Participation.**” Being a RIC congregation is a journey (it doesn’t end when you get your RIC certificate). We need to **actively work for full participation** of—well, of everyone, but especially those who have been marginalized by society, and many who are under increasing threats of violence when they express their authentic selves to others. “Reconcile” is not a noun, but a very active verb, and we need to evaluate how we need to evolve as a RIC congregation. Reconciling Works provides many resources as we continue our journey <https://www.reconcilingworks.org/ric/mapping-your-ric-journey/>.

**Full Participation:** Since St. Luke Lutheran Church became a RIC congregation in 2010, we are called not only to celebrate and advocate for our LBGTQA+ siblings, but also Indigenous peoples, and Black and Brown Persons of Color (BIPOC). This calls us to commit to anti-racism programs and to work for racial equity. <https://www.reconcilingworks.org/racialequityplan/> For our LBGTQA+ siblings, we welcome those with different sexualities and gender identities (a person’s deep internal sense of their own gender, which can differ from their biological sex at birth or sexuality), and also accept all aspects of their gender expression. **Gender expression** is how a person communicates their gender identity through clothing, body language, voice, mannerisms, hairstyles, and makeup. We also are called to commit to the full inclusion and empowerment of neurodivergent persons and those with mobility and other physical limitations. We strive to remove barriers and advocate and extend hospitality to all. Nothing can separate us from Christ’s love.

**Changes in How We Gather Information and Strive for Inclusion:** Some actions are very basic. Since 2016, the ELCA has asked congregations to examine their policies (including a church’s Constitution) in regard to the methods and forms used for gathering information on gender identity. [https://www.reconcilingworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/extending\\_hospit\\_gender\\_-1.pdf](https://www.reconcilingworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/extending_hospit_gender_-1.pdf)

They recommend that our forms and the way we gather information:

1. Include additional options for gender, for transgender, non-binary and/or gender non-conforming people (*using “gender identity” is more inclusive than asking for “gender” or “sex”, so a registration list could include a “Gender Identity” checklist that includes Female, Male, Gender Non-Conforming, and Custom, to further extend hospitality*)
2. When asking for a person’s personal information, include asking a person’s personal pronouns (*note: someone’s personal pronouns may not match their gender identity*)
3. When asking for a person’s honorific or title, include a gender-neutral option (*or eliminate asking for titles entirely*)

ELCA also recommends using phrases such as “Siblings in Christ” and “God’s Beloved” and clearly indicating labeling Gender Inclusive Restrooms (actions we have observed for years).

**ELCA Actions:** The ELCA has also taken steps to continually evaluate how we can attain full

engagement. For instance, the 2009 Social Statement on “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust” is now being reconsidered and will be updated. ELCA members are invited to participate in this process through prayer, study, and conversation. St. Luke member Brad Wendell was one of the leaders that helped develop the original 2009 statement. Some of the considerations of changes needed to the 2009 statement were summarized in a Pastoral Letter from Reconciling Works released in 2025 <https://www.reconcilingworks.org/pastoral-letter-from-reconcilingworks-board-of-directors/>

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# Committee Spotlight

## **Outreach and Social Ministry Committee** by Judy Tennant

As I was filling the Blue Cabinet one Saturday, a woman approached with her shopping bag. I invited her to take whatever she needed. She looked at me and said, “This cabinet has really been a lifesaver for me and my family.”

The Outreach and Social Ministry Committee (OSM) thanks you, the congregation, for supporting the Blue Cabinet and the Kitchen Cupboard with your generous donations. You touch the lives of so many and let them know that we see them and we care.

We have also supported Lutheran World Relief by assembling and shipping 50 Personal Care Kits and 49 quilts that were sent to people worldwide. We were inspired by Pastor Tim Krick, from Lutheran World Relief, when he said, “The more we give the more we have to give”. His sermon and presentation at Forum on May 31 were very inspiring. The committee has decided that we do have more to give and we will begin to collect items to assemble school kits in August!

The more we know, the more we can make a difference, so one of our missions is to educate ourselves. We do this by arranging forums like the one with Pastor Krick. We are in the process of arranging a Forum in September with Mary Jo Dudley, Director of Migrant Advocacy and Support (MAS). We are also exploring the possibility of a forum in the winter on food insecurity. We hope to involve people from the Cornell School of Agriculture and possibly some local legislators.

We welcome your suggestions and feedback, and we welcome you to attend our monthly meetings and possibly consider joining the committee. Sadly, we are losing two of our

committee members this summer. Kevin Sheets and Judy Jensvold have been valuable members of the committee but will be moving on to new adventures in Long Island and North Carolina. We thank them for sharing their gifts with us.

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# From the Loft

Erik Kibelsbeck  
*Music Director*

Summertime, and the planning for fall is under way! Mainly, at this point, the choir anthems. There was lots of marvelous choral music last semester, but in retrospect I believe it was not by a diverse enough field of composers. This fall will have better balance, while still being music of high quality and relevance, which is expressive and meaningful. Old favorites are still being programmed along with music that is new to us. Continuing to observe the Season of Creation in September means opportunities to pull unexpected themes into the choral music as well.

In planning the summer, I resolved to not have any weeks without someone else making music for the service, and--so far!-- this is working out. Thanks to all who have volunteered to sing or play! You all enrich our time together.

As I wrote last month, we are doing setting 8 for the summer, and unsurprisingly this congregation is picking it up quickly. New music does take many weeks to become engrained (I am still practicing the setting 8 pieces myself each week!), so I thank all who are being patient with the process. We will return to a familiar setting in the fall!

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# Zoom Corner

*Together,  
wherever we are.*

*Welcome to a new monthly article - The Zoom Corner! This section of the New Humanity will be a place for us to connect with the St. Luke family who worships with us via Zoom.*

# Gathering Beyond the Walls

by Diane Ricotta

It's summertime! Vacation happens. Picnics and outdoor time get planned on weekends. Everyone, especially here in the Northeast, wants to take advantage of the good weather to travel and to share time with friends and family. During these summer months of July and August, we invite you to take advantage of the convenience of St. Luke Online as you move around and plan how to worship as you also plan the very important activities of re-creation.

Are you away, or simply not feeling like getting yourself into the church building? Simply find your way to [stlukeithaca.org](http://stlukeithaca.org), scroll down until you find the worship section, and click on the zoom link. You will be able to hear and participate in the service from wherever you are. The bulletin will appear for you to follow along, and the excellent audio/visual set up will give you a great immersive feeling as you participate from afar.

## **You're Invited! July 12**

Everyone is invited to join us online for services at 10:00 and then stay for a virtual coffee hour after Erik finishes the postlude. Get a mug or a glass of your favorite beverage, turn on your microphone and video (if you're comfortable) and join Erik, me and the "Online Regulars" for a short gathering. Some of us always meet after church, but on the 12th we would like to make it a meeting to familiarize everyone with the online connection capabilities, and to hear how you might use and improve this part of our church's outreach. We would also like to hear what you like about the online services and how it has helped you stay connected to your church family.

We want to improve and expand our online presence to make it easier for more people to participate not only in services, but in a wider range of activities and programs. You can help us by attending a virtual service on the 12th and then staying afterward to enjoy connecting with friends and giving us feedback on your experience.



St Luke Lutheran was a Ruby-level sponsor of the Ithaca Pride Festival in 2024 and 2025, and

we happily increased our sponsorship to the Emerald-level in 2026. We received the email below from Ithaca Pride Alliance after the event.

*It was so great to you meet and have your church represented at Pride! We are still glowing (and recuperating) from the incredible energy of this year's 3rd Annual Ithaca Pride Festival, and we wanted to reach out with a big, huge THANK YOU! Our community showed up with so much love, joy, and unity. It reminds us why we do this.*

*As you know, we are a 100% volunteer-run organization and it takes a village to put on an event of this magnitude. Your generous support was absolutely instrumental in making it happen! Simply put, your sponsorship directly funded the festival and allowed us to create a vibrant, safe, and joyful space for our local LGBTQ+ community and allies to celebrate together. Because of you, we provided an unforgettable experience for everyone who attended!*

*Thank you once again for standing with the Ithaca Pride Alliance! We are so proud to have you as a 2026 sponsor!*

*With PRIDE and gratitude,  
Ken Norcross (Treasurer) and the entire Board of Directors of the Ithaca Pride Alliance*

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# Announcements



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The Announcement email will  
be sent this week on Thursday.

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## Calendar

**Tuesday, July 7**

12:15 pm. Bring Your Own Lunch Bible Study

**Wednesday, July 8**

10:00 am. Staff Meeting

**Thursday, July 9**

1:00 pm CCC Events Committee

6:00 pm. Book Study Zoom

**Friday, July 10**

10:30 am. Tea and Tarot at Cornell

**Saturday, July 11**

5:00 pm. CCC Concert at Schwartz Plaza

**Sunday, June 12**

10:00 am Holy Communion

*St. Luke Office is generally open: Mon. 1 pm-5 pm, Tues. 9:30 am-1 pm,  
Wed. 8am-4pm, Thur. 9:30 am-5pm, Fri. 9:30 am-1pm*

***If you would like to be removed from this list, please reply or [send us an email](#) with  
UNSUBSCRIBE in the subject line. We will be sad to see you go, but...  
Remember, God loves you!***

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**Sunday 10:00 am  
Service of Holy Communion**

St. Luke is a [Reconciling in Christ Congregation](#) of the [ELCA](#). As a Reconciling in Christ Congregation, the people of St. Luke Lutheran Church are called by God to be a community of Christians, a part of the body of Christ. Because we believe we are one in God's eyes, we welcome the mix of ages, races, gender identities, physical and mental capabilities, and sexual orientations with which God's children are blessed. Everyone is invited to share in God's grace. We rejoice in the knowledge that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus--not our wealth, nor our poverty, nor our nationality, nor our political convictions, nor

whom we love, nor anything else in all creation. We are called to follow God's mission of reconciliation and justice with all humanity, and we celebrate our journey of discipleship with a special appreciation for the privileged responsibility of our campus related ministry.

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Our mailing address is:

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