

Belonging at KCCRC: What intentional inclusion means to us

Introduction

Kanata Community Christian Reformed Church (KCCRC) is committed to being a community-oriented church. Part of being a community church is welcoming everyone and creating the conditions where everyone can experience genuine belonging as a child of God and follower of Christ. That is captured in our statement of core values: Living Faith for Real Life: Authentic; Inclusive; Engaged.

Since 2020, when the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) released a major report on human sexuality, KCCRC has reflected on what inclusion means in relation to persons with different sexual orientation or gender identity. Answering that question has been a learning process. It has also included three overtures to Synod 2022, 2023, and 2024, all of which were adopted by Classis Eastern Canada. After congregational discussion and learning opportunities, council clarified KCCRC's approach, in May 2023, prior to Synod 2023, in the following statement:

For the purposes of community outreach and ministry with our members, Kanata Christian Reformed Church (KCCRC) will treat all people, including LGBTQ+ persons, as image bearers of God and loved by God, with dignity, respect, and welcome to participate fully in the life of KCCRC. As a member church of the Christian Reformed Church of North America, KCCRC will continue to work through due processes to advance inclusive approaches to our common mission and ministry.

After Synod 2023 and more local discussion, KCCRC council provided more details on its approach to inclusion in the following statement and recommitted to working within the CRCNA to advance this approach.

Inclusion and Belonging in KCCRC

KCCRC Council reaffirms the core belief that God gathers us and unites us in the risen Christ, through the daily presence and work of the Holy Spirit, guided by the inspired Word of God.

God loves every person as a bearer for God's image. Our primary identity in Jesus Christ, sealed in baptism and communion, comes before other important identities, whether racial, cultural, sexual, gender, political, ability-based, or others. Followers of Christ, with diverse identities, are bound together by the covenant relationship God established with humans, called to be children of God, and the non-human creation, for which we are called to care, from the beginning of time to the coming completion of God's work in the world.

KCCRC's mission is to serve and witness to God's love for the people and non-human creation in Kanata and the Ottawa region. Our ministry takes our context seriously. Kanata and the Ottawa region are growing in diversity of all types; our cultural context in this region and Canada is one of growing respect for and accommodation of diversity, while maintaining unity on more foundational principles such as respect for human rights and care for creation. As KCCRC actively engages in its context, respect for diversity and genuine inclusion is an important component of our ministry.

KCCRC seeks to honour diversity within unity, in a spirit of respect, humility, and continuous learning as we join God in God's work in our world. We seek to nurture the callings and spiritual gifts of everyone, and we seek to enfold Christ followers from various cultures, identities, communities, and perspectives.

KCCRC views human sexuality as a gift from God, to be received with gratitude, integrity, and care. To flourish, God intends that sexual intimacy occur within a covenanted relationship of marriage. We recognize there are different views within our membership about same-sex marriage and gender non-conformity. We respect conscientious decisions, based on discernment before God in community, and we foster respect for the conscientious decisions of others.

All who desire to follow Jesus, whatever their sexual orientation or gender identity, may receive baptism and present children for baptism, celebrate the Lord's Supper, join as members, and serve in any capacity according to their gifts and callings, as they apply to all members or worshippers in our community.