

A Quick Look at the Chicago Coalition of Welcoming Churches

Website – chicagowelcomingchurches.org

Why are We Considering the Welcoming Coalition of Churches?

As leaders and congregation, Christ Lutheran has valued the opportunity to create a space where everyone can come to know Jesus. Our visitors and members note the feeling of acceptance as an important and somewhat unique gift of this church. Joining the Coalition offers us the opportunity to examine our mission and make a statement of intentional welcome, in this case with regard to LGBT+ community.

What is the Coalition?

A collaboration of more than 70 churches and other ministries in the Chicago metropolitan area which welcome and affirm people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. The coalition helps people identify churches that provide safe, supportive, affirming environments where all people can worship, regardless of sexuality or gender.

Coalition Goals

- Spread message of member churches' commitment to inclusion
- Connect leaders, members and guests of partner churches for fellowship, education, support and resource-sharing for practices of faithful welcome.

History

The Coalition was formed in 2000 following the first nationwide conference of ecumenical Welcoming Churches, held in DeKalb.

Theme for recent Coalition worship services and programs

- Sharing Light, Sharing Faith in Divided Times
- Witnessing to Welcome
- Steadfast Love

Members (per website):

- 70 member churches, mostly in metro area but spreading to the suburbs
- 17 of 70 members are ELCA churches, located primarily in Chicago

Suburban churches include:

- Northbrook United Methodist Church
- Glenview Community Church
- First United Methodist Church, Arlington Heights
- St. John United Church of Christ, Arlington Heights
- Congregational United Church of Christ, Arlington Heights
- Community Church of Wilmette
- Prince of Peace United Methodist Church, Elk Grove Village
- Trinity Lutheran Church (ELCA), Des Plaines
- First United Methodist Church of Park Ridge

Cost to us

Suggested donation of \$150 per year, though many churches do not (or cannot) give anything.

What we get

A sign in the Pride Parade if we march, a listing on the website, fellowship and support opportunities

Some questions to ask ourselves

Does it fit with our guiding principal of "All are Welcome – All the Time"?

Does it fit with our church family?

Does it fit with our theology?