

# St. John's Lutheran Church

## Welcome Statement

**Acts 10:44-47 (NRSV):** *While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter said, "Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?"*

The Christian church has always been doing the work of understanding just how expansive God's love is and how to live into and out from that love in this life together. At St. John's Lutheran Church, we don't have it all figured out yet, but we aim to extend the radical welcome of Jesus Christ to all who come to us, and believe that the image of God's love is made more complete as we come together to love one another and our neighbors.

You are welcome to become part of St. John's in all areas--not only to sit in the pews on Sunday morning--because this is how we change. This statement of welcome is a reflection of a congregation that understands that we are always reforming, always engaged in a dynamic relationship with a God who is calling us to love each other as we are all loved by God. We'll have good days and bad days, and learn as we go. This statement will likely change as people who explore new facets of our humanness challenge us to affirm that, "Yes, God loves us, too," just as Peter came to understand that God loved both Jew and Gentile.

While our roots are in the German-American experience, we welcome those from all ethnic heritages and experiences that brought us to this land. We are working to honor what each community brings in their understanding of the radical inclusiveness of God.

If you or your ancestors are or were indigenous to this land, enslaved persons, immigrants--with or without documents, refugees, or colonizers,

**You are welcome here.**

We believe that Creator God is always creating and renewing life, calling their creation good. We welcome and affirm people of all sexual orientations and gender identities.

If you are transgender, genderqueer, male, female, cisgender, lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, intersex, ace, or straight,

**You are welcome here.**

We are a Christian church living out our faith in the Lutheran tradition. This is a tradition that holds truth for us, but we also believe that truth and wisdom are found in many faith traditions and religious expressions.

If you have grown up in the church, have never stepped foot in a church, have backgrounds in other faith traditions or religions, or have been hurt by experiences within the church and are risking something in coming,

**You are welcome here.**

We are a community that works to honor the wholeness of persons who live in all kinds of bodies.

If you are someone who lives with a disability or someone who identifies as a non-disabled person; if you are typically-developing or someone with a developmental disability; if you live with chronic pain or chronic disease, or are an athlete; if you are small, large, or somewhere in between,

**You are welcome here.**

We believe that God demonstrates the importance of relationships through the relational nature of the Trinity. Relationships are both difficult and holy.

If you are single, married, divorced, separated, partnered, or have lost a spouse; if you are adopted, estranged from your family, or have a chosen family,

**You are welcome here.**

We celebrate life at all ages and stages!

If you are one day old or 101 years old, in school, the middle of your career, are someone who's dedicated to caring for your home and/or children or aging relatives, or are retired,

**You are welcome here.**

We believe that our sin creates injustice in this world, but that our worth comes by being created in the image of God and not material wealth.

If you own your home, rent, live with your parents, sleep on a friend's couch, or are experiencing homelessness,

**You are welcome here.**

We believe that we are all saints and sinners, and that God can redeem all of our experiences.

If you have, or had, addictions, relapses, regrets, or a criminal record; if you carry shame or feel a sense of unworthiness,

**You are welcome here.**

We believe that God's call to "do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God" can be accomplished across, and apart from, the political spectrum.

If you are Republican, Democrat, Green Party, Independent, Socialist, not registered to vote, or ineligible to vote,

**You are welcome here.**

And we believe that there is joy in knowing one another and being the body of Christ!

If you come in your Sunday best, Converse high tops, flip flops (as Californians do), or if you only have the clothes on your back; if you listen to rap, country music, or smooth jazz; if you arrive 15 minutes early or are late...as usual; if you get the giggles in church, take a more contemplative posture, or are the first one to get to the cookie table,

**You are welcome here.**

Who we are matters. We bring our full selves to this place, gathering around the table to be nourished in communion with God and with each other that we may go out and live God's love in the world.

**Welcome to St. John's Lutheran Church!**