



April 3, 2018

Bishop James Dunlop  
Acting President  
United Lutheran Seminary

As you know, ReconcilingWorks: Lutherans for Full Participation (ReconcilingWorks) created, supports and maintains the Reconciling in Christ (RIC) program and the designation of an ELCA setting to be RIC. The RIC designation should help an LGBTQ person and their families and friends to know that such a setting is a place where they can bring their whole selves to the community and to worship God without fear of rejection or discrimination.

ReconcilingWorks believes God values and embraces each person as a beloved child, that the Spirit gives a diversity of gifts for the common good, and that Jesus Christ calls us to work for justice. The ministries of ReconcilingWorks embody, inspire, and support the acceptance and full participation of people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions, their families, friends, and allies, within the Lutheran communion and its ecumenical and global partners.

We have been monitoring the events at United Lutheran Seminary relating to the involvement of your now former President, Dr. Latini, in an organization that advocated and supported reparative or conversion therapy for LGBTQ people. Our Executive Director, Aubrey Thonvold, at the invitation of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, attended a listening session with LGBTQ students, and current and retired rostered leaders in early March at United.

It is clear there is deep pain, anger, and mistrust amongst the community at United. United Lutheran Seminary is not presently a safe place for LGBTQ people to participate fully. We realize steps to rebuild trust, including resignations, have occurred. However, there is much more healing and holy work that needs to be done.

We also note that United has not submitted a welcoming statement as the newly created seminary from the merger of Gettysburg and Philadelphia. While Gettysburg and Philadelphia each had adopted a welcoming statement, and achieved the RIC designation, as a new entity, United has not done the same.

Given these circumstances and events, and after prayer and discussion, the Board of Directors of ReconcilingWorks, at its meeting on March 15-17, 2018, voted to "suspend" the RIC status of United Lutheran Seminary.

During this time of suspension, ReconcilingWorks require that you remove the RIC logo and references to that designation from your website and other statements. In order for the suspension to be lifted, we need to see the following:

1. In light of the harm caused in this case by the references to reparative therapy, and consistent with ELCA statements on the subject, a statement by the Board of Trustees, supported by faculty and staff, rejecting and repudiating reparative therapy for LGBTQ people.
2. The development and implementation of a process that leads to the adoption of an authentic welcoming statement by United. ELCA settings can become RIC in a whole host of ways; all of them, though, involve communal discussion, education, listening, and discernment. Students, staff and faculty should be engaged. ReconcilingWorks stands ready to partner with you in this journey. We have resources that we believe would be useful for the process.

ReconcilingWorks will continue to strive to live out our ministry to include and celebrate the fullness of the gifts of the LGBTQ community in and for the ELCA. We will continue to name the sins of discrimination, injustice and hatred leveled against LGBTQ people in and by the church and society. We are committed to meeting people where they are on this journey of understanding, realizing that it can be slow and not always straightforward. But our trust is in the Spirit of wisdom and understanding and the Spirit of counsel and might. Our hope is in the resurrected Lord who is always reforming, always reconciling, always making things new.

You and all at United Lutheran Seminary will remain in our prayers. Please feel free to contact us in the days and weeks ahead. We look forward to a continued partnership for the sake of the Gospel and the world.

God's peace,



Cheryl Stuart  
Co-Chair of the Board of Directors  
ReconcilingWorks



Michael Crandall  
Co-Chair of the Board of Directors  
ReconcilingWorks