Awareness, Understanding, and Care: A Reflection for Rostered Ministers

Preparing for Thoughtful Ministry with LGBTQIA+ People in Our Communities

ReconcilingWorks
LUTHERANS FOR FULL PARTICIPATION

An Invitation to Reflect

As a rostered leader, you are called to accompany people through the fullness and complexity of their lives. This calling invites us to continually deepen our understanding of the people and communities we serve, including those of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions (SOGIE).

Across the United States, LGBTQIA+ people and their families navigate a wide range of experiences shaped by their communities, faith traditions, cultures, and state laws. Some experience belonging and affirmation, while others encounter isolation, discrimination, uncertainty, or fear.

How aware are you of these lived experiences, and how might that awareness shape the ways you lead, accompany, and care for God's people?

This reflection is an invitation to approach these questions with curiosity, humility, compassion, and a willingness to learn.

1. Deepening Our Awareness and Understanding

Sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression are distinct yet interconnected aspects of human experience. Each person's understanding and expression of their identity is uniquely their own.

- How comfortable am I with my understanding of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression? Where might I need to deepen my knowledge?
- What assumptions might I carry about LGBTQIA+ people, their relationships, families, or experiences of faith?
- How do race, ethnicity, age, economic circumstances, disability, and geography shape the experiences of LGBTQIA+ people in my community?

2. Understanding the Communities You Serve

The experiences of LGBTQIA+ people are shaped not only by personal relationships but also by the social, political, religious, and legal environments in which they live.

- Am I aware of the laws, policies, and public conversations in my state that affect LGBTQIA+ people, particularly transgender and nonbinary people, youth, and families?
- Do I understand how these realities might affect someone's sense of safety, access to healthcare, education, employment, or willingness to participate in a faith community?
- Whose voices and lived experiences am I listening to? Whose perspectives might be missing from my understanding?

3. Practicing Intentional and Thoughtful Ministry

Our calling to care for our neighbors invites us to consider how our ministry practices communicate dignity, compassion, belonging, and God's expansive love.

- How might LGBTQIA+ people experience my congregation or ministry setting? What would communicate welcome, and what might create uncertainty?
- Am I prepared to offer compassionate, confidential pastoral care to an LGBTQIA+ person or family navigating a difficult experience?
- How might my preaching, teaching, prayers, language, and pastoral practices more intentionally acknowledge and affirm the dignity of LGBTQIA+ people?
- What relationships, resources, or additional learning would help me better accompany LGBTQIA+ people in my particular ministry context?

Moving from Awareness to Accompaniment

You do not need to have every answer to begin this work. Faithful ministry begins with a willingness to listen, learn, reflect, and respond with care.

As you prepare for our time together, consider:

What is one area where I need to grow in understanding, and one intentional action I can take to more thoughtfully care for LGBTQIA+ people in my ministry and community?

May our reflection deepen our compassion, strengthen our relationships, and help us embody God's expansive love in the communities we are called to serve.