

**Consolidated Report: Welcoming Diversity and Neighbor Engagement**  
**TLC Imagination Event – July 18, 2021: 1:00 – 4:00 pm**

**The Welcome Diversity Team at Transfiguration** consists of the Racial Justice Team, Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Support Team, Addiction Awareness Team and the Mental Health Team. It was formed in 2017 as a result of the Strategic Plan.

The Welcome Diversity Team will:

Demonstrate a willingness to learn, adapt and welcome a diverse and changing community into the church.

Increase congregational awareness regarding gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, culture and other issues that we may more fully follow Jesus command to “Love Thy Neighbor”.

We will strive to host an event or educational opportunity four times a year on topics of diversity and cultural interest, which will also be open to the public.

Some of the events were:

RIC Sunday

2019 Neighborhood Night Out

Ellie Krug - Gray Area Thinking

My Grandmother’s Hand Book Study

We are a small group but always looking for more to join. Bloomington is changing and we want to be welcoming to all and make TLC a warm, inclusive and safe place to worship.

**TLC'S Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Support Group** came into being when TLC became a Reconciling in Christ Congregation in 2014. Our goal is to have inclusivity and awareness for all of us at TLC. We have hosted guest pastors/speakers, guest musicians and presentations that focus on the LGBTQIA+ community, including Austen Hartke and Reverend Dr. Barbara Lundblad. We meet monthly, the second Monday of the month, and are always open to new members and ideas. And just a side note, we have snacks at our meetings!

In 2021, RIC Sunday was on February 28th. Rev Jeff Sartain, Pastor at Edina Community Lutheran Church, was our guest preacher. All members of the RIC Ministry Team participated as lay leaders in the worship service. Rev. Sartain spoke of the exclusion, judgement and shame that LGBTQIA people experience in our culture and from the church. He shared some of his own story as a gay man and pastor in the ELCA. He spoke of the life-giving power of being affirmed by the Gospel message of God's love for all people, including LGBTQIA identified people. That love, embodied in Christian communities that affirm and welcome LGBTQIA persons, continues to be life-giving, even life-saving, and community building in a culture divided by on-going judgement and discrimination.

We get worship ideas and resources from Reconciling Works, which is a great place to look for education opportunities. We are also getting some books in the library and there are many faith based organizations you can find online for learning such as PFLAG, The Reformation Project, Queer Theology, Queer Grace.

Our welcome statement reads:

Transfiguration Lutheran Church welcomes all who seek to experience the joy of God's love and grace. We welcome all because God welcomes all people of every race, culture, sexual orientation, gender identity and relationship status.

Please join us! All are welcome!

**The Racial Justice Team at Transfiguration** is a small group of members who find racial prejudice a problem that invites Christian action to address. The group seeks to promote awareness and discussion of racial justice within the broader congregation and also outside the TLC community.

The origin of our Racial Justice Team occurred about five years ago when the Minneapolis synod held a two-day symposium on the topic at Gloria Dei church in St Paul. A group of five from TLC attended the symposium where we listened to presentations, interacted with members of other congregation and prepared a list of actions to take back to TLC. The actions included formation of our group and selection of a liaison to participate in ongoing synod meetings on the racial justice topic.

Over the past five years our group has remained small, about a half dozen members. We wrote and adopted a charter for the group and in accordance with the guidelines for TLC small groups. We have continued to meet, on a monthly basis with discussions on events and issues related to racial justice. We have conducted events and made contributions to TLC. The list of activities includes:

Conducted several evening presentations of videos/movies related to racial justice:

Race: The Power of an Illusion

A Time for Burning

Selma

Neither Wolf nor Dog

Selected and purchased a dozen books for the TLC library with a racial justice theme

Purchased and framed two pieces of racially themed art for display in the narthex. We dedicated the art works to Pastor Stephanie and presented them to the congregation at a Sunday service. The artist of one piece, Padre Johnson, attended the service and gave talk in the fellowship hall following the service.

Participated in racially themed discussions outside of TLC; synod racial justice liaison meetings, respectful conversations, Johnson symposium, and Meeting our Muslim Friends and Neighbors.

On Martin Luther Sunday, 2020 we invited Pastor Danny Givens to speak at our services and also at a gathering in the fellowship hall. His talk was accompanied by a luncheon of southern fried chicken, collard greens and corn bread and was attended by about 80 people.

Initiated conversations with Bloomington city government, police force and school system on how TLC can contribute to promoting racial justice within the community. (Pastor Arthur will talk more about this in his presentation.)

We authored a statement on racial justice that was adopted by the TLC council and by the congregation at the annual meeting in January of this year. The statement reads as follows:

“We, the members of Transfiguration Lutheran Church, believe that God's creation enfolds one single humanity made up of multiple ethnicities, all members of an earthly realm. We believe that racism – a mix of power, privilege, and prejudice – is a violation of God's intention for humanity. We stand together with humble repentant hearts in raising our voice against racism and combatting it in any form. We will oppose and confront systemic racism as we actively work to welcome and honor all people at Transfiguration and in the broader community.

# TLC Community Demographics Report

## July 2021

### Bloomington Community Demographics

- Population (84,983)
- Population grew by 6.89% last ten years (slower than the state average)
- Next five years project 4.1% drop in population
- AGE: Average age is 44.03 (state average is 39.91)
- 39.78% of people in Bloomington are 55+ y.o., 35.78% are 25-54 y.o.
- Average HH income is \$94,894 (state average is \$91, 019)
- 37% of households range from 75k-149k, 19.27% of households range from less than 10K- 34.9k
- White Household Median Income \$82,567, POC Household Median \$62,428
- DIVERSITY: White people= 82.9% of population, POC = 17.1% (consistent with state)
- 5 year trend expects flat diversity growth
- HOUSING: 56% of owner-occupied homes are valued from \$300-500K
- 70.68% owner-occupied, 29.32% renter-occupied (18.9% of rentals are 20-49+ units)
- Median Monthly Mortgage = \$1706, Median Monthly Rent = \$1178
- EMPLOYMENT: 64% of people 16+ are in the workforce
- 73% White Collar employees, 27% Blue Collar Employees

### Bloomington Public Schools Demographics

- Elementary Enrollment in 2020: 3933 (Down from 4317 in 2019)
- Secondary Enrollment in 2020: 5652 (Down from 5692 in 2019)
- Total Enrollment = 9645 (47% white students, 53% students of color)
- 13% of students are learning English in their education environment
- 34% of students are eligible for free/reduced lunch
- Enrollment past 5 years: 10,149 – 10,143 – 10,098 – 10,009 – 9,645
- Student Diversity has increased 10% in the last 10 years

### TLC Demographic Information

- Baptized Membership: 2224 (down 2.6% since 2013)
- Ave Age of ELCA Lutheran Church Member is 55 y.o. (Pew Research, 2018)
- Diversity: 95% of members are white
- Majority of Zip Codes Served: 55431, 55437, 55438, 55420
- Mission Support in 2019 & 2020: \$18,750 (down 44% since 2013) (2.2% of operating budget)