

The Use of Pronouns (and why getting them right is important)

In many languages, people are often referred to in the third person. The pronouns frequently used in English are he and she. Personal pronouns are as important to people as their name. If someone misidentifies you by addressing you by the wrong name you are likely to correct them and move on. Should someone repeatedly call you by the wrong name you will likely feel dismissed and unimportant. It is disrespectful. The trouble with pronouns is that they are often assumed based on an individual's appearance. These assumptions are not always correct and can be painful for the person misidentified. Using he/she pronouns sometimes sends the message that an individual should appear a certain way to be acceptable.

By using a person's correct personal pronouns you are saying, I see you and you matter to me. It creates an environment that is caring, inclusive and respectful. By using correct pronouns we are showing all people that they belong in our space. All people are welcome and it is safe for all people to be present and live their truth.

This is often not true in many places in society for gender non-conforming, non-binary, intersex and transgender people.

As a congregation when we clearly display 2SLGBTQIA+ symbols and include pronouns on our nametags our hope is that those who identify as 2SLGBTQIA+ will immediately experience a sense of relief when entering our church space.

The Reconciling in Christ committee has been and continues to work with council on ensuring our church is an affirming and welcoming space for all people. You will see symbols of this as we begin to come together again in person. Name tags with pronouns is a huge step forward to becoming that safe place for everyone.

Carolyn Conibear
RIC Committee