

Eastern Synod Queer Committee Updates: Ready for Pride — resources, invitations, and how to be part of the work

The Eastern Synod Queer Committee met May 7 to continue advancing the five mandates given by Synod Assembly. Our work is moving on several fronts at once: preserving and sharing queer history in the church, equipping congregations with practical resources, strengthening the RIC pathway, showing up visibly at Pride, and responding to current events with advocacy and action.

As always, our aim is to make this work tangible—so congregations and individuals can see what’s underway and know exactly where there’s space to participate.

As we head into Pride Month, we’re inviting congregations across the Eastern Synod to show up with confidence and joy—whether that means marching, hosting worship, participating in community events, or making your welcome visible in your local context. This is also the season when practical support matters most: using shared resources, coordinating presence, and gathering the stories and symbols that will shape our Assembly exhibit in the year ahead.

Mandate 1: Education and self-awareness

The Queer History Project continues to grow through interviews, story gathering, and the larger timeline work that will help congregations engage queer history in the ELCIC and Eastern Synod with clarity and care.

Together, we have an opportunity to build something lasting, and we need your help to see this project through. We are working on a synod-wide Queer History Timeline that honours the people, decisions, and moments that shaped queer and 2SLGBTQIA+ life in our church.

We’re inviting congregations and individuals to submit key dates and milestones from your context. Every entry helps build the shared record we’ll display as part of the Shower of Stoles installation at Synod Assembly.

You can help by adding dates using the **Google Form** link, below. Each form submission will automatically populate our shared timeline, which we’ll use to create a comprehensive, living timeline of these important moments in our history. Over the next year we’ll use your entries to build this timeline, and it will be displayed as part of the Shower of Stoles installation at Synod Assembly—helping visitors see the broader story that holds the stoles, the people, and the moments they represent. Following assembly, it will also be part of a travelling Shower of Stoles exhibit that will move across congregations in the Eastern Synod.

Timeline submission form link: <https://forms.gle/g1R1xjCUb8WWvMQC9>

Please submit **one event per form entry**, and feel free to submit as many entries as you like. Helpful examples include (but are not limited to):

- RIC milestones and anniversaries
- Congregational “firsts” or turning points
- Synod/church decisions, statements, or significant events
- Pride participation and other moments of public witness
- Key broader events that shaped the context for queer inclusion and advocacy (regionally and nationally)

Sources are appreciated whenever possible, but partial information is welcome—we can follow up as needed.

Mandate 2: Equipping congregations and leaders

As we head into Pride season, this mandate is where the committee’s work becomes immediately practical. We’re continuing to build and organize resources that congregations can use—especially resources that are easy to adapt locally, whether you have rostered leadership available or are relying on lay leadership.

Many of the Pride and worship resources are already housed in our shared resource library, and we’re continuing to strengthen what’s available there. We’re prioritizing more “plug and play” options for congregations—especially lay-led service resources—so that showing up well for Pride (and beyond) doesn’t require reinventing the wheel.

How you can use this right now: if your congregation is participating in Pride month, planning a Pride-adjacent service, or simply wanting to make your welcome visible in June, we encourage you to pull from the resource library and adapt what fits your context. And if you have a resource you’ve used successfully (a liturgy, prayer, reading, blessing, FAQ handout, signage wording, or a simple service outline), we welcome additions—this library gets stronger when congregations share resources with one another.

Mandate 3: Encouraging and facilitating the RIC process

RIC support continues to move forward in very concrete ways. Recent “Building an Inclusive Church” training in NITH Valley expanded to include approximately 40 participants, and Canadian-context SOGIE training has been delivered for Synod Council, synod deans, and National Church Council, with additional training planned in the South Shore Lutheran Shared Ministry.

If your congregation is exploring the RIC process (or wondering what an appropriate next step could be), we invite you to connect. It’s often easier to move forward when you don’t have to invent the process alone. If you’re not sure where to start, we can help you identify a first step that fits your context.

Mandate 4: Intentional public presence at Pride events

Pride Month is almost here, and we're looking forward to showing up with congregations across the Eastern Synod. If your congregation is participating in a Pride event—parade, worship, booth/table, or community gathering—we'd love to hear from you and support where we can.

To help congregations show up visibly and consistently, Pride banners and photo frames will be available for use again this year, and Eastern Synod Pride merch is available for congregations and individuals (shirts for men/women/kids).

Eastern Synod Pride merch link:

<https://design.tshirtelephant.com/EasternSynod/shop/home>

Planning a group order? If your congregation would like to order 10+ items, please contact the Eastern Synod office—a 20% discount is available for larger orders.

We're also continuing to build Pride resources that are easy to use in local contexts, including “plug and play” options for both rostered and lay-led services.

Finally, we invite congregations to share the joy! Post your pride photos and short reports using #lutheransforlove—these stories help strengthen synod-wide momentum and encourage others to participate.

Mandate 5: Responding to current world events with advocacy and action

This mandate is about helping the church respond faithfully when queer and trans communities face harm in the wider world. In practice, that means sharing timely, concrete ways congregations can show solidarity—through public statements when appropriate, advocacy and letter-writing when it's useful, and clear guidance that helps congregations respond locally with care.

Over the coming months, you may see the Queer Committee share calls to action connected to significant public developments or key dates of observance. When we do, we'll aim to make the “next step” clear and practical—what to read, what to share, who to contact, and what a faithful response can look like in congregational life. We also remain committed to holding this work intersectionally, recognizing that queer justice is inseparable from other justice concerns in our communities.

How you can help: When a call to action is shared, consider participating and sharing it within your congregation. If your congregation has experience responding to local issues (advocacy partnerships, community coalitions, or pastoral response in a crisis), we also welcome learning from what you've found helpful.

Synod Assembly project: Shower of Stoles + Queer History Timeline (and how to participate)

As we move toward the 2027 Synod Assembly, several threads are intentionally converging: the Queer History Project (stories and timeline), the Shower of Stoles installation, and the broader work of reconciliation, advocacy, and public witness. The most helpful way to support Assembly preparation right now is through timeline submissions and Shower of Stoles contributions.

Our Shower of Stoles is being designed as a walk-through, interactive installation and a visual representation of queer pastors in our midst—past and present—and of the broader queer story within the church, including those who were not publicly known, who served while closeted, or who were not allowed to answer their calls. Stoles may be newly created, donated, or loaned, and each will be accompanied by a brief story card that can be credited or anonymous.

Following Assembly, we will be releasing a travelling version of this exhibit, including stoles, stories, resources and timeline, to be used by Eastern Synod congregations in their local contexts.

How you can help: We're inviting people across the synod to contribute in several important ways:

- Offer a stole (donation or loan)
- Share a story connected to a stole (credited or anonymous)
- Volunteer to help with stole-making, organizing/cataloguing, story cards, or exhibit set-up. **Contact the synod office to let us know that you'd like to help with this project.**

Stole and Story submission form link: <https://forms.gle/jdiV38Y9knTydLL76>

Ready to get involved? Here's three ways to help right now:

1. **Add to the Queer History Timeline** using the Google Form (one event per submission). You can add one date or twenty—every contribution helps build the record we'll display at Assembly as part of Shower of Stoles.
2. **Submit a stole and/or story (or volunteer)** for Shower of Stoles using the form link above (donated or loaned; credited or anonymous).
3. **Invite synod/committee presence at Pride events;** use our resources for Pride worship; and share post-Pride photos using #lutheransforlove.