

## Background

The Joy! vision focus areas are "Dare to be Faithful", "Welcome to Wrapped In", and "Intentional Inclusivity".

Intentional Inclusivity means making space for the unseen and undervalued, and being vigilant in learning to welcome and value the people who are marginalized.

The Intentional Inclusivity areas of focus are...

- the differently abled
- the young adults
- the LGBTQIA+ community

All of this has been agreed upon by our church leaders. In addition, leadership responses to open ended questions are a united response from Pastor Mark, Council, Staff, Vision Leaders and the LGBTQIA+ Intentional Inclusivity team.

This survey essentially launches the LGBTQIA+ Intentional Inclusivity Team process. No team recommendations have been made at this point – the survey will help guide us.

LGBTQIA+ stands for *“Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/questioning, Intersex, Asexual, and many other terms including non-binary and pansexual”*. These terms are used to describe a person's sexual orientation or gender identity.

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## 1. Executive Summary

### Survey Purpose

The **LGBTQIA+ Intentional Inclusivity Vision Team** at Joy! is seeking to better understand the views of Joy!'s attendees and members on this topic with a brief survey. Survey replies will help guide the Vision Team's future in listening sessions and discussions.

### Survey Participants

The survey participants included attendees and members of Joy! Lutheran Church. A total of 223 people responded to the survey. Based on our average weekly attendance of 305, our survey response was 73%. Everyone did not respond to every question.

The demographics of the survey participants are as follows:

<u>Ages</u>	<u>Responses</u>		<u>Gender</u>	<u>Responses</u>	
Under 19	14%	32	Female	56%	125
19-24	2%	4	Male	34%	75
25-34	5%	12	Non-binary (not solely female or male)	1%	2
35-44	10%	22	I do not wish to answer	8%	17
45-54	24%	53	Skipped question	2%	4
55-64	29%	65	<b>Total</b>		<b>223</b>
65+	9%	20			
I do not wish to answer	5%	12			
Skipped question	1%	3			
<b>Total</b>		<b>223</b>			

<u>Years at Joy!</u>	<u>Responses</u>		<u>Identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ Community</u>	<u>Responses</u>	
Less than 3	14%	32	Yes	6%	14
4-10	27%	60	No	82%	183
11-15	16%	35	I do not wish to answer	9%	21
More than 15	35%	77	Skipped question	2%	5
I do not wish to answer	6%	14	<b>Total</b>		<b>223</b>
Skipped question	2%	5			
<b>Total</b>		<b>223</b>			



## Results Summary (Highlights of “Strongly agree”, “Agree”, “Disagree”, “Strongly Disagree” – remaining responses “Neither Agree nor Disagree”)

### Support for the LGBTQIA+ Vision:

- **86% is** supportive and **5% is not** supportive of the LGBTQIA+ Intentional Inclusivity Team in welcoming and affirming this community of people at Joy!.
- **8% would** and **82% would not** leave Joy! if the LGBTQIA+ community **is** Intentionally Included.
- **31% would** and **35% would not** leave Joy! if the LGBTQIA+ community **is not** Intentionally Included.

### Biblical Considerations

- **74%** believe being LGBTQIA+ **is not** sinful and **9%** believe it **is** sinful.
- **67%** believe that Joy! **should** and **12%** believe the Joy! **should not** affirm and celebrate marriage equality (i.e., marriage for same-sex couples).
- **56% do** and **12% do not** believe sexual intimacy between people of the same sex in a committed, monogamous relationship is a gift from God.
- **51% would** and **18% would not** like more information, dialogue and/or sermons from Joy! on interpreting what the Bible says about gender or sexual orientation. Within the LGBTQIA+ community, **79% would** and **7% would not**.
- **44% would** and **18% would not** like more information about the ELCA's denominational approach towards the LGBTQIA+ community. Within the LGBTQIA+ community, **71% would** and **7% would not**.

### Current Situation

- **51%** believe Joy! **is** and **17%** believe Joy! **is not** already fully Intentionally Inclusive of LGBTQIA+ attendees and members in all aspects of the church. Within the LGBTQIA+ community, **64%** believe Joy! **is** and **29%** believe Joy! **is not**.
- **48%** believe that people in the LGBTQIA+ community **are** and **11%** believe they **are not** comfortable being fully themselves at Joy! as individual and with their partners. Within the LGBTQIA+ community, **64%** believe they **are** and **21%** believe they **are not**.

## Demographics

- **Age:** In general, people ages 34 and below were the most supportive. This is important because this is another group we are targeting for intentional inclusivity – Young Adults. In general, people ages 55-64 had the most concerns.
- **Gender:** In general, female and male responded in a similar manner.
- **Years at Joy!:** In general, people with 10 or less years at Joy! were the most supportive. In general, people with greater than 15 years at Joy! had the most concerns.
- **Identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ Community:** As expected, those in the community are very supportive. They also expressed an interest in more information and some desire for improvement.

## “Neither Agree nor Disagree” Responses

- In general, depending on the person and the question, this either means
  - “I really don’t care.”
  - “I don’t feel strongly one way or another.”
  - “Other things are more important to me.”
  - “I haven’t decided yet.”
- In all these cases, hopefully more dialogue and information will help you decide and/or feel more strongly about this topic (in either direction).

## Comment and Question Themes

- Theme #1 - Why is Joy! Lutheran Church choosing to include “Intentional Inclusivity of the LGBTQIA+ Community” in our vision?
  - Joy! will continue to be a welcoming church to all while focusing on intentional inclusivity to groups of people.
  - The ELCA is not forcing Joy! to intentionally include LGBTQIA+ but it is supporting it.
  - The LGBTQIA+ Community is estimated at 4.5%-8.1% of the total population in size. Data also shows that the number is likely higher because people from the community are fearful of “coming out”. Most of this community is unchurched.
  - Many from the LGBTQIA+ Community are excluded or unwelcomed at churches.
  - Our focus is on the LGBTQIA+ community at Joy! and their families, and the unchurched LGBTQIA+ community in the Gurnee area. We feel that intentional inclusivity of this group (including “celebrating” the community) is critical because many have been pushed away from the church. Just saying that we are welcoming, or welcoming them like we traditionally do, will not be enough to convince them they are truly welcomed.
- Theme #2 - What are the next steps of Joy!’s LGBTQIA+ Intentional Inclusivity Team? Specifically, what will the process look like, would you consider recommendations from attenders, and what about those that do not support this team’s work?
  - The team’s work is guided by our desired outcome – “It is clear to attenders and non-attenders that Joy! overtly loves, affirms, welcomes, includes, supports, acknowledges, and celebrates the LGBTQIA+ Community. Joy! is a church that the LGBTQIA+ community thrive in.”
  - All further next steps will also be guided by the survey feedback and processes followed by other churches.
  - All recommendations from the survey will be considered by the team.
  - We expect to have listening and Q&A sessions to provide a forum for further dialogue.
- Theme #3 - Included in the survey responses were some biblical concerns primarily related to a belief that this lifestyle is sinful.
  - We intend to have ongoing dialogue and information on this topic to help all of us better understand what the bible says about this community.
- Theme #4 - Included in the survey responses were many positive comments.
  - The team appreciates all the supportive comments and encouragement!

## 2. Survey Results

### Question Detail Format

For each question, all responses are recapped first showing counts and percentages by response category. Following that, if there are notable differences in a specific demographic, that is included also. Information highlighted in **yellow** show more supportive responses. Information highlighted in **turquoise** show more concerns about the topic.

Q1: I **support** the LGBTQIA+ Intentional Inclusivity Team in welcoming and affirming this community of people at Joy!.

**Headline: 86% is supportive and 5% is not supportive of the LGBTQIA+ Intentional Inclusivity Team in welcoming and affirming this community of people at Joy!.**

### All Responses

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Count	130	59	21	2	9	221
Percentage	59%	27%	10%	1%	4%	100%
Summary Count	189		21	11		221
Summary Percentage	86%		10%	5%		100%

### Age

	Strongly Agree / Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Strongly Disagree / Disagree	Count
Less Than 19 years	88%	13%	0%	32
19-24 Years	100%	0%	0%	4
25-34 years	100%	0%	0%	12
35-44 years	95%	0%	5%	22
45-54 years	92%	6%	2%	53
55-64 years	82%	9%	6%	65
Greater than 65 years	90%	10%	0%	20

Q2: I **would** like more information, dialogue and/or sermons from Joy! on interpreting what the Bible says about gender or sexual orientation.

**Headline: 51% would and 18% would not** like more information, dialogue and/or sermons from Joy! on interpreting what the Bible says about gender or sexual orientation. Within the LGBTQIA+ community, **79% would** and **7% would not**.

## All Responses

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Count	43	71	69	22	17	222
Percentage	19%	32%	31%	10%	8%	100%
Summary Count	114		69	39		222
Summary Percentage	51%		31%	18%		100%

## Age

	Strongly Agree / Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Strongly Disagree / Disagree	Count
Less Than 19 years	50%	31%	19%	32
19-24 Years	75%	25%	0%	4
25-34 years	83%	8%	8%	12
35-44 years	45%	41%	14%	22
45-54 years	42%	45%	13%	53
55-64 years	60%	22%	17%	65
Greater than 65 years	55%	35%	10%	20

## In LGBTQIA+ Community

	Strongly Agree / Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Strongly Disagree / Disagree	Count
Yes	79%	14%	7%	14
No	51%	34%	14%	183



Q3: I **would** like more information about the ELCA's denominational approach towards the LGBTQIA+ community.

**Headline: 44% would and 18% would not** like more information about the ELCA's denominational approach towards the LGBTQIA+ community. Within the LGBTQIA+ community, **71% would** and **7% would not**.

## All Responses

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Count	38	59	86	23	16	222
Percentage	17%	27%	39%	10%	7%	100%
Summary Count	97		86	39		222
Summary Percentage	44%		39%	18%		100%

## Age

	Strongly Agree / Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Strongly Disagree / Disagree	Count
Less Than 19 years	38%	53%	9%	32
19-24 Years	75%	25%	0%	4
25-34 years	58%	33%	8%	12
35-44 years	55%	32%	14%	22
45-54 years	42%	42%	17%	53
55-64 years	42%	32%	25%	65
Greater than 65 years	50%	40%	10%	20

## In LGBTQIA+ Community

	Strongly Agree / Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Strongly Disagree / Disagree	Count
Yes	71%	21%	7%	14
No	41%	40%	18%	183

Q4: I believe being LGBTQIA+ is sinful.

**Headline: 74% believe being LGBTQIA+ is not sinful and 9% believe it is sinful.**

## All Responses

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Count	12	9	38	55	109	223
Percentage	5%	4%	17%	25%	49%	100%
Summary Count	21		38	164		223
Summary Percentage	9%		17%	74%		100%

## Age

	Strongly Agree / Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Strongly Disagree / Disagree	Count
Less Than 19 years	6%	16%	78%	32
19-24 Years	0%	0%	100%	4
25-34 years	0%	8%	92%	12
35-44 years	5%	14%	82%	22
45-54 years	4%	13%	83%	53
55-64 years	17%	17%	66%	65
Greater than 65 years	0%	25%	75%	20

## Tenure

	Strongly Agree / Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Strongly Disagree / Disagree	Count
Less Than 3 years	3%	22%	75%	32
4-10 Years	2%	13%	85%	60
11-15 years	11%	20%	69%	35
Greater than 15 years	13%	14%	73%	77

Q5: I believe that Joy! **should** affirm and celebrate marriage equality (i.e., marriage for same-sex couples).

**Headline: 67% believe that Joy! should and 12% believe the Joy! should not affirm and celebrate marriage equality (i.e., marriage for same-sex couples).**

## All Responses

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Count	94	55	48	10	16	223
Percentage	42%	25%	22%	4%	7%	100%
Summary Count	149		48	26		223
Summary Percentage	67%		22%	12%		100%

## Age

	Strongly Agree / Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Strongly Disagree / Disagree	Count
Less Than 19 years	84%	16%	0%	32
19-24 Years	75%	25%	0%	4
25-34 years	92%	8%	0%	12
35-44 years	82%	14%	5%	22
45-54 years	77%	15%	8%	53
55-64 years	55%	23%	22%	65
Greater than 65 years	55%	35%	10%	20

## Tenure

	Strongly Agree / Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Strongly Disagree / Disagree	Count
Less Than 3 years	69%	28%	3%	32
4-10 Years	77%	20%	3%	60
11-15 years	66%	29%	6%	35
Greater than 15 years	68%	12%	21%	77

Q6: I believe sexual intimacy between people of the same sex in a committed, monogamous relationship is a gift from God.

**Headline: 56% do and 12% do not believe sexual intimacy between people of the same sex in a committed, monogamous relationship is a gift from God.**

## All Responses

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Count	70	55	71	12	15	223
Percentage	31%	25%	32%	5%	7%	100%
Summary Count	125		71	27		223
Summary Percentage	56%		32%	12%		100%

## Age

	Strongly Agree / Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Strongly Disagree / Disagree	Count
Less Than 19 years	63%	38%	0%	32
19-24 Years	100%	0%	0%	4
25-34 years	75%	25%	0%	12
35-44 years	68%	27%	5%	22
45-54 years	72%	23%	6%	53
55-64 years	48%	31%	22%	65
Greater than 65 years	30%	55%	15%	20

## Tenure

	Strongly Agree / Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Strongly Disagree / Disagree	Count
Less Than 3 years	75%	22%	3%	32
4-10 Years	58%	38%	3%	60
11-15 years	51%	37%	11%	35
Greater than 15 years	58%	23%	18%	77

Q7: I believe that people in the LGBTQIA+ community **are** comfortable being fully themselves at Joy!, as individuals and with their partners.

**Headline: 48%** believe that people in the LGBTQIA+ community **are** and **11%** believe they **are not** comfortable being fully themselves at Joy! as individual and with their partners. Within the LGBTQIA+ community, **64%** believe they **are** and **21%** believe they **are not**.

## All Responses

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Count	30	77	91	21	3	222
Percentage	14%	35%	41%	9%	1%	100%
Summary Count	107		91	24		222
Summary Percentage	48%		41%	11%		100%

## In LGBTQIA+ Community

	Strongly Agree / Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Strongly Disagree / Disagree	Count
Yes	64%	14%	21%	14
No	46%	42%	11%	183

Q8: I believe Joy! **is** already fully Intentionally Inclusive of LGBTQIA+ attendees and members in all aspects of the church.

**Headline: 51%** believe Joy! **is** and **17%** believe Joy! **is not** already fully Intentionally Inclusive of LGBTQIA+ attendees and members in all aspects of the church. Within the LGBTQIA+ community, **64%** believe Joy! **is** and **29%** believe Joy! **is not**.

## All Responses

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Count	30	84	70	37	1	222
Percentage	14%	38%	32%	17%	0%	100%
Summary Count	114		70	38		222
Summary Percentage	51%		32%	17%		100%

## In LGBTQIA+ Community

	Strongly Agree / Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Strongly Disagree / Disagree	Count
Yes	64%	7%	29%	14
No	50%	32%	17%	183

Q9: I would leave Joy! if the LGBTQIA+ community is Intentionally Included.

**Headline: 8% would and 82% would not leave Joy! if the LGBTQIA+ community is Intentionally Included.**

## All Responses

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Count	9	9	21	45	138	222
Percentage	4%	4%	9%	20%	62%	100%
Summary Count	18		21	183		222
Summary Percentage	8%		9%	82%		100%

## Age

	Strongly Agree / Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Strongly Disagree / Disagree	Count
Less Than 19 years	3%	9%	88%	32
19-24 Years	0%	0%	100%	4
25-34 years	0%	0%	100%	12
35-44 years	5%	14%	82%	22
45-54 years	6%	2%	92%	53
55-64 years	9%	14%	75%	65
Greater than 65 years	5%	5%	90%	20

## Tenure

	Strongly Agree / Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Strongly Disagree / Disagree	Count
Less Than 3 years	3%	6%	88%	32
4-10 Years	2%	12%	87%	60
11-15 years	6%	9%	86%	35
Greater than 15 years	9%	6%	84%	77

Q10: I would leave Joy! if the LGBTQIA+ community **is not** Intentionally Included.

**Headline: 31% would and 35% would not** leave Joy! if the LGBTQIA+ community **is not** Intentionally Included.

## All Responses

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Count	34	35	75	49	29	222
Percentage	15%	16%	34%	22%	13%	100%
Summary Count	69		75	78		222
Summary Percentage	31%		34%	35%		100%

## Age

	Strongly Agree / Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Strongly Disagree / Disagree	Count
Less Than 19 years	31%	41%	28%	32
19-24 Years	25%	75%	0%	4
25-34 years	50%	42%	8%	12
35-44 years	55%	41%	5%	22
45-54 years	32%	26%	42%	53
55-64 years	28%	25%	46%	65
Greater than 65 years	25%	45%	30%	20



## Question and Comment Themes

### Theme #1: Why is Joy! Lutheran Church choosing to include "Intentional Inclusivity of the LGBTQIA+ Community" in our Vision?

#### Survey comment and question themes relating to the above question

- Joy! welcomes everyone. Is it necessary to single out any group?
- Joy! may end up being known as the LGBTQIA+ church.
- "Celebrates" in the definition of intentionally included is a problem. Why do they get special treatment and added focus in sermons?
- It seems like this is a push by a very small group.
- Is the ECLA forcing Joy! to do this?
- To be "intentionally inclusive" to the LGBTQIA+ community to the exclusion of or without a similar overt intent for other groups would not be in alignment with the spirit of the mission.
- Are we expecting an influx of the LGBTQIA+ community at JOY?
- Do we have a community of LGBTQIA individuals that are feeling disenfranchised?
- This initiative is unnecessary and it smacks of jumping on the issue of the day. This group is being treated differently and undermining the purpose.
- It seems at times that the mainstream is being ignored and the 3%ers are getting the attention. The primary audience is no longer being paid attention to.

#### Team Response

- **The Joy! vision includes intentional inclusion of the LGBTQIA+ community**
  - The Joy! vision focus areas are "Dare to be Faithful", "Welcome to Wrapped In", and "Intentional Inclusivity".
  - Intentional Inclusivity means making space for the unseen and undervalued, and being vigilant in learning to welcome and value the people who are marginalized.
  - The Intentional Inclusivity areas of focus are...
    - the differently abled
    - the young adults
    - the LGBTQIA+ community
  - All of this has been agreed upon by our church leaders.
- **Joy! will continue to be a welcoming church to all while focusing on intentional inclusivity to groups of people.**
  - Joy!'s values include "Accept each person as they are" and "Build a loving community through intentional relationships" which focuses on all in our community.
  - Joy!'s values also includes "Aspire to include Children & Youth in all aspects of church life". This is an example of focus and celebration of a group of people at Joy!.
- **The ELCA is not forcing Joy! to intentionally include LGBTQIA+, but it is supporting it.**
  - In 1991, the Churchwide Assembly passed a resolution stating that, "Gay and lesbian people, as individuals created by God, are welcome to participate fully in the life of the congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America."

- While the Churchwide Assembly has not come to agreement on the issue of marriage equality, the ongoing debate has prompted a policy that gives autonomy to individual ministers and their congregations.
- **The LGBTQIA+ Community is estimated at 4.5% - 8.1% of the total population in size. Most of this community is unchurched.**
  - The only data we have for Lake County is that 5% to 7% of CLC students identify as part of the LGBTQ community.
  - Based on this survey, 6% of the respondents are part of the Joy! LGBTQIA+ community.
  - Based on Gallop information across the US, the percentage of adults identifying as LGBTQ is 4.5% and more specifically, the percentage of millennials identifying as LGBTQ is 8.1%.
  - Data also shows that the number is likely higher because people from that community are fearful of “coming out”.
  - 40% of the homeless youth (12-24 Years old) served by agencies identify as LGBT. The most common reason being family rejection based on sexual orientation and gender identity, and the second most common reason being forced out by their parents after coming out. (Source: National Coalition for the Homeless)
  - Lesbian, gay, and bisexual kids are 3x more likely than straight kids to attempt suicide at some point in their lives. 41% of trans adults said they had attempted suicide. (Source: SAVE Suicide Awareness Voices of Education)
- **Many from the LGBTQIA+ Community are excluded or unwelcomed at churches.**
  - A 2019 Harris Poll called "Accelerating Acceptance" indicates that the percentage of non-LGBTQ Americans "Very" or "Somewhat" uncomfortable with having LGBTQ members at their place of worship was 22% in 2018.
  - There continue to be many church denominations that do not accept LGBTQIA+ members or same-sex couple marriage.
  - Many times, if the LGBTQIA+ community feel unwelcomed, their family members also feel unwelcomed.
  - Joy! Lutheran allows full participation of this community in the church. Many of the Gurnee churches would not be accepting of this community's lifestyle and would not allow full participation in the church.

**Therefore, our focus is on the LGBTQIA+ community at Joy! and their families, and the unchurched LGBTQIA+ community in the Gurnee area.**

**We feel that intentional inclusivity of this group (including "celebrating" the community) is critical because many have been pushed away from the church. Many family members have been told they need to decide between their children and their faith. Just saying that we are welcoming, or welcoming them like we traditionally do, will not be enough to convince them they are truly welcomed.**

**Theme #2: What are the next steps of Joy!'s LGBTQIA+ Intentional Inclusivity Team?  
Specifically, what will the process look like, would you consider recommendations from  
attenders, and what about those that do not support this team's work?**

**Survey questions about “process”**

- What is the end goal the team really is striving for?
- What is the right pace for this initiative?
- What benchmarks would indicate Joy! is progressing in this Vision?
- Does Joy! have any comparators that informs us as to what a LGBTQIA welcoming ELCA church looks like?
- What concrete steps will Joy! take to become more LGBTQIA+ inclusive?
- Does the team's process include seeking to understand and/or commit to being a Reconciling in Christ congregation?

**Recommendations from survey respondents for possible future consideration**

- Joy! should consider gender titles.
- Joy!'s website should let this community know they are welcome.
- Joy! should offer workshops that teach ways cisgendered people can make nonbinary people feel safer and more comfortable at Joy!.
- Joy! should ensure that our sermons, bulletins, etc use language inclusive of the LGBTQIA+ community.
- Joy! should support this community (outreach, support services, etc.).
- It would be helpful to find a way to help those not familiar with this community to get to know people from this community.
- A unisex restroom should be built to support this community.
- Joy! should celebrate Pride Month.
- We need specific efforts to invite them as a community to Joy!.
- We need to reach out and invite the LGBTQIA+ community and neighboring geographies to spread awareness of our LGBTQIA+ inclusivity.
- We need guidance on how to have conversations with people outside of Joy! about why we support the LGBTQIA+ community.
- LGBT+ incorporates two broad categories: non-heteronormative sexualities and non-cis gender identities. While overlap occurs between the two and both communities frequently run in the same circles. Keep in mind that at the core it is two issues and may require different approaches/topics of sermons or discussion is aimed at a specific part of either group/identity are going to be addressed.
- We need to communicate what appropriate behavior at Joy! looks like regardless of sexual orientation.
- If we decide to teach the younger children about LGBT community, we need to make sure they understand that their identity doesn't need to be decided/understood ASAP.
- If people question LGBTQ and the Bible this should be explored in study groups.

- We need more education on what the letters LGBTQIA stand for.
- The team needs to continue to reach out throughout this process.
- Rather than sermons on the bible and LGBTQIA+, I would prefer dialogues. I would prefer sermons that teach us how to talk to one another like "Peter and Paul" did when they disagreed. The LGBTQIA+ topic is only one of many church divisive topics (e.g. Abortion, Politics, Death Penalty, Immigration, etc).

### **Survey questions regarding those that do not support the team's work.**

- How do we allow the people who are "not there yet" and "may never be there" still feel intentionally included?
- How will questions/comments from those that are not comfortable with the LGBTQIA+ community be handled?
- What will Joy!'s stance be for those who oppose or deny the LGBTQIA+ community?

### **Team Response**

- **All recommendations from the survey will be considered by the team.**
- **Joy! attenders who do not support the work of this team continue to be loved and included in the Joy! family. We expect to have listening and Q&A sessions to provide a forum for further dialogue.**
- **The LGBTQIA+ Intentional Inclusivity team has defined the desired outcome and what we feel success will look like. The Joy! vision leaders support this.**
  - The desired outcome is "It is clear to attenders and non-attenders that Joy! overtly loves, affirms, welcomes, includes, supports, acknowledges, and celebrates the LGBTQIA+ Community. Joy! is a church that the LGBTQIA+ community thrive in."
  - Success looks like:
    - New attenders say our LGBTQIA+ support is one of the reasons they chose to attend and continue to attend.
    - Members of the LGBTQIA+ community, their families and friends say Joy! has positively supported them prior to, during and after "coming out". Members of the community agree that Joy! completely includes them and loves them as they are.
    - Joy! attenders (all ages) agree that they better understand sexual orientation/ gender identity and what the bible says about the LGBTQIA+ community. They agree that they accept, love, include and celebrate the community.
    - Joy! non-attenders tell others that they are clear Joy! is a welcoming and wonderful place for the LGBTQIA+ community to worship, lead and participate.
  - All further next steps by the team will be guided by the survey feedback and processes followed by other churches. Development of the plan is in progress. No recommendations have been proposed by the team at this time.

**Theme #3: Included in the survey responses were some biblical concerns.**

**Survey comment and question themes relating to the above concerns**

- The question whether being same-sex attracted is sinful is not enough. For me, it is not sinful until someone ACTS on it. So monogamous gays do not sin.
- Why isn't purity taught as in Scripture?
- Can we just stick to what the bible actually says instead of cherry picking words from here and there to create the desired narrative?
- How will you address the biblical claims "against" that lifestyle?
- I believe in marriage between a man and a wife. I also believe that it is not my place to judge same sex marriages. Jesus showed love to all.
- I believe that same sex marriage/relationship is a sin.
- I just need to discern God's point of view on these issues so I can be fully invested in how we move forward. I guess I just need more time and information on the subject.
- While I believe that homosexuality is a sin. A sin that God is in charge of judging. Not me.
- I think that the LGBTQIA+ lifestyle it is sinful according to God's word. I don't want to see a gay couples having a baptism.

**Team Response**

**It is clear that there are Joy! attenders who have strong and questioning biblical views on this topic. Thank you for your openness and honesty! We intend to have ongoing dialogue and information on this topic to help all of us better understand what the bible says about this community. For those who see sin in this lifestyle, we do not ask you to change your beliefs. All we ask is that you be open to and supportive of a future where the LGBTQIA+ community is intentionally included at Joy!.**

## **Theme #4: Included in the survey responses were many supportive comments.**

### **Survey comment and question themes relating to the positive comments**

- As a parent of an LGBTQ child I am not clear where Joy stands in loving/affirming my child. I believe Joy is neutral (I.e it's ok. We wouldn't be kicked out) but I'd like to know and feel if they are affirming, that my child is welcomed and loved the way they are. I know God welcomes and loves my child.
- Are we "all in" on this? We cannot afford to be neutral at such a time as this.
- One of the things that drew me to Joy! was it's openness to everyone including the LGBTQIA community. I hope Joy! continues to be a place where all are welcome and differences are celebrated!
- Thanks for making this part of the Joy! mission and for engaging us and pursuing this effort.
- I like that Joy is welcoming in this area. I'm glad to see this openly & intentionally moved upon.
- I think this is great and will support in whatever capacity is needed.
- I have friends who left their churches because their children weren't accepted by the church for their sexual identity (the children are gay). This is very sad and my friends are now not attending church or still searching for a church that is open to the gay community. I hope this doesn't happen at Joy!
- THIS IS AWESOME!!! Thank you for all your hard work and effort.
- Thank you for taking this topic seriously. I believe Jesus was focused on bring heaven down to earth and your work will help us achieve that for a group of people that have for far too long been marginalized and excluded from that message.
- I believe all people are Loved by God.
- I welcome worshipping with all who follow Christ.
- Love the Lord your God with all your heart soul and mind. Love your neighbor as yourself.
- As a long-time Joy! member and the parent of a child on this spectrum, and a friend of many non cis humans, this topic is of critical importance to me.
- This becomes an issue to me when people look at these people differently and act different towards them. I don't see or look at them as being different.
- I fully support this initiative and it's one of the main reasons I joined your church.
- I think we need to openly invite the LGBTQIA community.
- Acceptance occurs as people get to know people in this community.
- I'm just hoping I'll work up the courage to invite my LGBTQIA+ friends, and I hope they feel genuinely welcomed as themselves, not just nicely welcomed because we're being intentionally inclusive. I'm not particularly concerned about this, as I feel Joy! has always been welcoming to everyone regardless of who they are, but I suppose it's just nice to confirm it.
- Thru the yrs. I have had classmates, fellow employees, relatives, friends who are gay. But there didn't seem to be the "labeling" that seems to occur today. I accepted them as they were/are. It's sad to think that many have been turned away from churches of various denominations.

### **Team Response**

**The team appreciates all the supportive comments and encouragement!**

# 3. LGBTQIA+ Terminology

**Lesbian** – Term used to describe female-identified people attracted romantically, erotically, and/or emotionally to other female-identified people.

**Gay** – 1. Term used in some cultural settings to represent males who are attracted to males in a romantic, erotic and/or emotional sense. 2. Term used to refer to the LGBTQIA+ community as a whole, or as an individual identity label for anyone who does not identify as heterosexual.

**Bisexual** – A person emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to males/men and females/women. This attraction does not have to be equally split between genders and there may be a preference for one gender over others.

**Transgender** – A person who lives as a member of a gender other than that expected based on anatomical sex. Sexual orientation varies and is not dependent on gender identity.

**Queer** – 1. An umbrella term which embraces a matrix of sexual preferences and orientations. 2. This term is sometimes used as a sexual orientation label instead of 'bisexual' as a way of acknowledging that there are more than two genders to be attracted to, or as a way of stating a non-heterosexual orientation without having to state who they are attracted to. 3. A reclaimed word that was formerly used solely as a slur but that has been semantically overturned by members of the maligned group, who use it as a term of defiant pride.

**Intersex**—Someone whose sex a doctor has a difficult time categorizing as either male or female. A person whose combination of chromosomes, gonads, hormones, internal sex organs, gonads, and/or genitals differs from one of the two expected patterns.

**Asexual** – Person who is not sexually attracted to anyone or does not have a sexual orientation.

**+** - Ensures inclusion of all identities to make sure all feel welcomed and that nobody is left out.

# 3. LGBTQIA+ Terminology

**Gender Identity** – A person’s sense of being masculine, feminine, or other gendered.

**Sexual Orientation** – The desire for intimate emotional and/or sexual relationships with people of the same gender/sex, another gender/sex, or multiple genders/sexes.

**Cisgender** – describes someone who feels comfortable with the gender identity and gender expression expectations assigned to them based on their physical sex.

## Gender Pronouns

**female/feminine** - she/her/hers

**male/masculine** - he/him/his

**gender-neutral** - they/them/theirs