

# GAUGING CHURCHES - LGBTQ+ AFFIRMATION CHECKLIST

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Church is meant to be a safe space of fellowship, community, celebration, and spiritual growth. It is supposed to be a safe haven. But is it safe and healing for queer individuals?

Many queer people (myself included) are asking : How do I know if I'm truly included in this church? Am I safe or welcomed in this space?

**An affirming church means being unapologetically welcoming and including of LGBTQ+ people.** But how can you tell if a church is affirming? What are some of its characteristics?

If you are a queer person wondering about these questions like me, this checklist could be for you. The checklist is designed to help you to assess if a church welcomes you as your queer self. You deserve to be you.

Love,  
Priscilla

Helpful Notes:

1. Take your time with this checklist. It might take a few minutes or much longer to complete.
2. If you're unsure about an item as it relates to a church, feel free to write down some your notes, put a question mark, and/or skip it.

## Disclaimer

The content in this guide is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, mental health services, diagnosis or treatment; it is also not meant to be definitive for determining safe spaces or communities. It is provided to be informative only and not as comprehensive guidance.

Please don't disregard professional advice or delay seeking help if you need it. The content provided by Pride and Grace Counseling is not a substitute for professional help or medical advice.

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## STATEMENT OF BELIEFS & VALUES

The church explicitly welcomes LGBTQ+ people, states that God loves them and that the gospel does not discriminate. It does not hold the stance that LGBTQ+ people are sinful or wrong due to their gender identity and/or sexual orientation.

## PRESENCE & REPRESENTATION

LGBTQ+ people are present and actively participating in the church. Queer people and experiences are also present on the church's social media, website, and other forms of public facing platforms.

## LEADERSHIP & HIRING

The church ordains and hires queer people, and allows queer people to be in leadership, without reservation or restrictions.

## MARRIAGE

The church performs, acknowledges, and approves of marriages between queer peoples, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation.

## BAPTISM

The church performs baptisms and recognizes baptisms for queer people.

## COMMUNITY

There are life groups, small groups, and/or community groups that include and are specific for LGBTQ+ individuals are present.

## INCLUSIVITY & EDUCATION

The church has evidence of knowledge about LGBTQ+ experiences, language, and demonstrates their continued learning to support LGBTQ+ members.

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## THE RESULTS ARE IN! ...NOW WHAT?

This checklist is **not** here to tell you: “Jump in with both feet!” or “Head for the hills!” There are many reasons why someone would not (or cannot) attend an affirming church. There is also much more to consider that this checklist does not address (examples: inclusive facilities, normalizing pronoun usage).

So at this point, you might still be confused. Here are some decisions you could choose from:

- Do more research about the church to better answer the checklist if any items were ambiguous.
- Add your own items of significance to the checklist.
- Reach out to the church’s leadership to have conversations about inclusion. (Note: This may or may not go well, depending upon their openness.)
- Attend the church.
- Continue your search.

You get to choose where to go from here. You deserve to be celebrated, included, and a full participant within the church you attend.