

Our Rainbow Crossing group hopes these **Glossary of Terms**, and **Best Practices of GLBTQ Issues** are helpful to you as you celebrate Christian diversity and a desire for equality for all persons. **Queer 101** will give the reader a clearer picture of what it means to be transgender, bisexual, lesbian, gay, queer or intersex. Through healthy discussion of these issues we pray that our church family will better understand the needs of every person.

## Glossary of Common Terms

**Ally:** Noun: someone who attempts to affirm LGBTQ persons on personal and institutional levels.

**Bisexual:** Noun: an individual sexually attracted to more than one gender. Adjective: of or relating to sexual attraction to more than one gender.

**Cisgender:** Adjective: describing a person who identifies with and expresses the gender they were assigned at birth.

**Coming out:** Short for “coming out of the closet.” Accepting and letting others know of, one’s previously hidden sexual orientation or gender identity / expression. Note: Coming out is a daily and life long process.

**Gay:** Adjective: largely has replaced “homosexual” in referring to males who are sexually and affectionately attracted to other males. Sometimes colloquially used to refer to anyone of GLBTQ orientation.

**Gender:** A classification/ assignment of individuals to a “gender” group” -- “woman/female” or “man/male” -- according to their observed biological sex. There are many other gender identities and expressions.

**Gender Binary:** The false concept that all perceived, expressed and identified gender falls into polar opposite categories of “male” or “female.”

**Gender Expression:** The way in which a person presents gender, or in which that gender is perceived by society. This may or may not be representative of the person’s gender assigned at birth or that person’s gender expression. Note: A person’s gender expression does not have to line up with their gender identity.

**Heteronormativity (or something is heteronormative):** The assumption that a heterosexual identity and heterosexual relationships is normal, superior, and can be seen as “a choice”. In the United States, we live in a heteronormative culture. Unless we are otherwise intentional, we perpetuate this heteronormative culture with heterosexism.

**Heterosexism:** The system that is the underlying cause of homophobias and heterosexist acts.

**Heterosexual:** Adjective: referring to persons who are sexually and affectionately attracted to persons of the other gender. Generally males are attracted to females and vice versa. This perpetuates the gender binary.

**Intersex:** Adjective: a variation in reproductive or sexual anatomy that does not fit the typical definitions of female/ male sex binary. If someone is born with ambiguous genitalia, many times doctors or parents will want to do surgery to make their child fit into either the male or female category. This can be problematic because sometimes the choice the doctor or parents make may not be the gender the child will identify as later on. As a society, we are very uncomfortable when anything gender related cannot be labeled either male or female.

**Lesbian:** Adjective and noun: A possible term and identity for women who are sexually and affectionately attracted to other women. Some women prefer to be called “gay” or “queer” rather than “lesbian.”

**Lifestyle:** An inaccurate term sometimes used to describe the lives of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons. Sexual orientation may be part of a broader lifestyle, but is not one in itself – just as there is no “straight lifestyle.” Best avoided altogether.

**LGBTQ:** Acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer. Often varied in precedence to indicate no particular prominence or superiority, as in “GLBTQ” or “QTGBL” and sometimes includes the initial “I” for intersex.

**Preferred Gender Pronouns (PGP):** The pronouns that best match a person’s gender identity. Examples are he/him/his or she/her/hers and the gender neutral they/them/theirs. Some persons use pronouns not listed here, or do not use pronouns at all. It is best to refer to someone by their preferred gender pronoun. If you do not know or are unsure, it is okay to politely ask someone. Politely asking someone what their preferred gender pronouns are is better than guessing, potentially using incorrect pronouns, and potentially offending that person. If you make a mistake, apologize and move on. You do not need to make it a big deal.

**Queer:** Originally a negative term for “gay” or “lesbian” – now being reclaimed by some (especially younger) gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons as a self-affirming umbrella term. Still offensive when used as a derogatory epithet.

**Sexual orientation:** Innate sexual attraction / romantic feelings. This term is preferred to “sexual preference.”

**Transgender:** Adjective: an umbrella term referring to persons whose birth-assigned gender and gender identity or gender expression may not be the same. This can – but does not necessarily – include preoperative, postoperative or nonoperative female to male or male to female persons, female or male cross-dressers, drag queens or kings, female or male impersonators, gender queers, and intersex persons. When writing or talking about a

transgender person, use the name and personal pronouns that are consistent with the way the person lives publicly.