

April 2024 Open and Affirming Task Force Article in "The Caller"

What about Transgender – the "T" in LGBTQ+?

During the September Special Church Meeting to consider the motion to become an "Open and Affirming" church, among the concerns for raised was the matter of transgender. This is a very broad term for persons who do not identify with their apparent birth gender. Transgender may mean someone who chooses to live as a person whose gender identity is not their assigned birth gender identity – most often referred to as their birth sex. If medical assistance – hormone therapy or surgical, is used to change gender, such persons may choose to identify as transsexual – that is, someone who has undergone a change of sex. Since there are many possible stages along the path, and since the effectiveness of the medical assistance depends, in part, on the age at which it is initiated, and because its availability to the person may depend on their financial situation, some choose not to use the transsexual identifier. It is important to distinguish between gender and sexual expression. Trans persons may be bi, "straight", gay, lesbian, or non-binary, just as persons who are living with their birth gender identity might.

Persons who identify as trans do so because there is for them a psychological disconnect or dissonance between their apparent birth gender and their sense of self and how that self fits into the expectations for their birth identity. Some transgender persons choose to participate in athletics – and do so for the joy of it, just as anyone else would. For more, much more on this, please take some time to visit the website <https://www.transathlete.com>. Among the resources on that web site under the "start here" tab is a very complete glossary of the terms in current use that relate to human expression of gender and sexuality.

To explore the challenges of being transgender and transsexual, and to enjoy a good story in the process, here are couple of novels and a memoir you might consider:

"Trans-Sister Radio" by Chris Bohjalian, and "Mad Honey" by Jodi Picoult and Jennifer Finley Boulanger, and "I Heard Her Call My Name: A Memoir of Transition" by Lucy Sante.

From your Open and Affirming Task Force with peace and love as we seek to embody God's all enfolding Grace.