

Our Actively Welcoming Congregation and How You Can Play a Part

Since our Welcoming Congregation Renewal group formed early last summer, not only have we as a committee learned much about gender identity, but it seems like the topic of transgender is really coming to the surface in the mainstream media. That is good news for raising awareness and a small step towards full acceptance in our society. But we have also learned it can be bad news when young people who want to express their true identity get a false sense of security in our often intolerant society. We actively want to change that.

As a Welcoming Congregation we want to create an environment where everyone feels welcome and safe. We want to make sure LGBTQ persons who are looking for a spiritual home know UUFNW is here and we are welcoming. Finally, we want to reach out and be active as an ally with the greater LGBTQ community. In these efforts we will strive to help our congregation learn more about sexual orientation and gender identity so that we are all comfortable with, and sensitive to, the possible feelings and fears of people who walk through our doors. We also plan to reach out to the larger community to invite the public to learn more about these topics and to send a clear message to our neighbors that we support, affirm, and welcome LGBTQ persons. Finally, we will participate in local events and find ways to participate in larger LGBTQ issues.

This ambitious vision will not take one congregational year, we may be at this for a while. We hope you will join us in this effort by attending our upcoming workshops and events, read some of the materials we share, and ask us questions.

Here is what we have planned this spring:

WORKSHOP PART II

Our first workshop was interesting and very informative and we will follow it up with a second workshop, **The ABCs of LGBTQ Part II**, on Sunday, March 1, following the service. We hope everyone will participate! It is ok if you missed Part I, we will start with a review for everyone.

SPEAKERS PANEL AND MOVIE/DISCUSSION NIGHT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

We also plan to have two larger events: a panel discussion with a variety of speakers with diverse perspectives on LGBTQ topics as well as a movie night to watch and discuss a film that brings up interesting discussion points on transgender.

INFO TABLE

We are planning to have a Welcoming Congregation Renewal info table set up once a month where after the service that day some of our committee members will be available for conversation, to answer questions, and to provide reading materials if you are interested.

MONTHLY E-BLAST

Please continue to read this monthly e-blast for more information!

PRIDEWORKS & WORKSHOPS

UUFNW is a sponsor of PrideWorks and we want to promote and support more workshops that youth and adults might attend in the area.

In the meantime, here are some materials we would like to share...

Information for your brain:

This piece by the **American Psychological Association** about transgender gives a great overview and covers a lot of the vocabulary we should all understand. It also gives advice on “How can I be supportive of transgender family members, friends, or significant others?”

<http://www.apa.org/topics/lgbt/transgender.pdf>

Identification for your heart:

“Hir” is a poem about a transgender youth performed by Alysia Harris & Aysha El Shamayleh at the Brave New Voices Festival poetry slam.

<http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=hir+poem+youtube&FORM=VIRE6#view=detail&mid=2AA943287756A8A43EB32AA943287756A8A43EB3>

Inspiration for your soul:

This Feb. 3 *New York Times* article “A University Recognizes A Third Gender: Neutral,” shows progress. http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/08/education/edlife/a-university-recognizes-a-third-gender-neutral.html?hp&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&module=photo-spot-region®ion=top-news&WT.nav=top-news&_r=1

Thank you for your participation in this renewal of our Welcoming Congregation efforts!

-The WC Renewal Team: Ellen Calves (chair), Michael Hardiman, Gayle Mottola, Vicki Bloom, Peg Breen, Chris Ferricane, Tyler Videla, Tracy Brenneman, DRE, and Rev. Michael Tino