

University Congregational United Church of Christ
COVENANT OF OPENNESS AND AFFIRMATION
WITH RESPECT TO SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Adopted by the Congregation - May 6, 1990

We, the members of University Congregational United Church of Christ, are a diverse group of people. We are persons of different ages, education, races, abilities and sexual orientations. We hold varying theological and political beliefs and come from different socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds. As a church community, we celebrate and find strength in that diversity and view it as a way to understand the inclusiveness of God.

We believe that, although we are many members, we are one body in Christ (Romans 12:4). As a part of that body of Christ, we are called to love one another, to do justice, to bring release to the oppressed, and to walk humbly with our God. Responding to that call, a goal of our ministry is to heal the brokenness we experience in ourselves and in our relationships with each other and with God.

We believe that we are made in God's image and that we are called to accept ourselves and our sexuality. Our sexuality is a gift of God which enriches our lives and deeply touches the reality of our own and others' humanity; it is one of the channels through which we experience life.

As a community of committed Christian people, we seek to end the continuing injustice of institutional discrimination, instances of violence, and setbacks in civil rights protection of gays and lesbians. We seek to work together in the light of the Gospel to define principles of human relationships and behavior that are based on nurturing each other as whole persons with love, responsibility, accountability and trust.

As a congregation and as individuals, we lift up the following as evidence of our openness and affirmation:

1. We celebrate the image of God in every person, we celebrate the sacred value in every life, and we affirm all relationships of support that are founded on the principles of love and justice.
2. We affirm that lesbian and gay persons are welcome within the community of believers upon making the same affirmation of faith that all other members make. Recognizing that gays, lesbians, and their parents and other family members are already loyal and active members of University Congregational United Church of Christ, we encourage them to share their talents, gifts and energy in the liturgy, life, employment, and leadership of the congregation.
3. We pledge ourselves to support and honor committed partnerships of lesbian/gay people, recognizing the difficulty of maintaining such partnerships in the absence of the social validation, role models, and legal frameworks that support heterosexual unions.
4. We condemn all acts of discrimination and violence (physical, emotional, economic, or legal) against persons because of their sexual orientation, just as we condemn such acts against people because of race, age, gender, religion, ethnic background, or physical/mental disabilities or limitations. We pledge to support advocacy efforts designed to assure that homosexual persons enjoy the same rights and privileges as heterosexual persons.

Therefore, we the University Congregational UCC, declare ourselves to be an Open and Affirming Church with respect to sexual orientation.