

The Welcoming Community Network

What Does It Mean to Be a Welcoming Congregation?

Congregations who publicly and successfully welcome bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender people have the following qualities:

- Include and address the needs of LGBT persons at every level of congregational life-in worship, in programs, in social occasions, and in leadership-welcoming not only their presence, but their gifts and the hopes of their lives as well.
- Assume the presence of LGBT people and celebrate this diversity by having inclusive language and content in their worship.
- Fully incorporate the experiences of LGBT persons throughout all programs, including religious education.
- Support LGBT affinitive groups such as GALA.
- Offer congregational and ministerial support for union and memorial services for LGBT persons.
- Celebrate the lives of all people and welcome same-sex couples, recognizing their committed relationships, and equally affirms expressions of caring and affection without regard to sexual orientation.
- Seek to nurture ongoing dialogue between bisexual, gay, lesbian, transgender and heterosexual persons and to create deeper trust and sharing.
- Affirm and celebrate LGBT issues and history during the church year.
- Attend to legislative developments and works to promote justice, freedom, and equality in the larger society.
- Speak out when the rights of bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender people are at stake.
- As persons of faith, confess their own imperfections in attitude and action and accepts the responsibility to resist fear and hate in all forms and to strive continuously to eliminate expressions of prejudice and discrimination.
- Declare their belief that, "all are called according to the gifts of God to them." Therefore acknowledging and affirming human diversity by creating a spirit of openness and peace within their congregation.
- Celebrate the rich diversity of human life we have in the Community of Christ.