

## Qualities of Welcoming Congregations

- Includes and address the needs of b/g/l/t persons at every level of congregational life—in worship, in programs, in social occasions, and in rites of passage—welcoming not only their presence, but the gifts and particularities of their lives as well.
- Assumes the presence of b/g/l/t people and celebrates this diversity by having inclusive language and content in their worship.
- Fully incorporates the experiences of b/g/l/t persons throughout all programs, including religious education.
- Includes an affirmation and nondiscrimination clause in our by-laws and other official documents affecting all dimensions of congregational life, including membership, hiring practices, and the calling of religious professionals.
- Engages in outreach into the b/g/l/t community in its advertising and by actively supporting b/g/l/t affirmative groups.
- Offers congregational and ministerial support for union and memorial services for b/g/l/t persons, and for celebrations of family definitions.
- Celebrates the lives of all people and welcomes same-sex couples, recognizing their committed relationships, and equally affirms displays of caring and affections without regard to sexual orientation.
- Seeks to nurture ongoing dialogue between bisexual, gay, lesbian, transgender, and heterosexual persons and to create deeper trust and sharing.
- Encourages the presence of a chapter of Interweave.
- Affirms and celebrates b/g/l/t issues and history during the church year.
- Attends to legislative developments and works to promote justice, freedom, and equality in the larger society.
- Speaks out when the rights of bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender people are at stake.
- Celebrates the lives of all people and their ways of expressing their love for each other.

## Action Steps to become a Welcoming Congregation

### Education

1. Offer religious education that incorporates bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender life issues, including the workshop series from the Welcoming Congregation Program.
2. Promote participation by the congregation's minister, religious education minister or director, president, and/or moderator in the Welcoming Congregation Program.
3. Offer a congregation-wide workshop program(s), with follow-up opportunities for study and reflection.
4. Use the Unitarian Universalist sexuality education program, *Our Whole Lives*.

### Congregational Life

5. Form a broad-based Welcoming Congregation committee to offer programs and monitor progress.
6. Adjust congregational bylaws and other relevant documents to include an affirmative nondiscrimination clause concerning membership, hiring practices, and the calling of religious professionals.
7. Use inclusive language and content as a regular part of worship services, and provide worship coordinators and speakers with guidelines on inclusive language.
8. Provide main worship space and ministerial services for bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender rites of passage, such as services of union and dedications of children.
9. Welcome bisexual, gay, lesbian, and/or transgender persons in the congregation's brochure.
10. Ensure that publications, public information, and programming reflect the requested status of any individual as s/he sees appropriate; recognize same-gender couples in directories and other publications as they desire.

## Action Steps to become a Welcoming Congregation (cont) :

### Community Outreach

11. Celebrate and affirm bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender issues and history during the church year (possibly including Gay Pride Week in June or National Coming Out Day in October).
12. Participate in and/or support efforts to create justice, freedom, and equality for bisexual, gay, lesbian, and/or transgender people in the larger society.
13. (*again*) Provide main worship space and ministerial services for bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender rites of passage, such as services of union and dedications of children. (This guideline is also listed as number 8 under Congregational Life.)
14. Establish and maintain contact with local bisexual, gay, lesbian, and/or transgender groups to offer support and promote dialogue and interaction.
15. Advertise in the local press and/or other media that reaches the bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender communities.
16. Provide use of building space on an equivalent basis with other Unitarian Universalist organizations when requested by members for programs and meetings of an Interweave (Unitarian Universalists for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Concerns) chapter.

If you have more questions please feel free to contact Amanda Lawrence at [missdufour@hotmail.com](mailto:missdufour@hotmail.com). She may not have the answers, but she will do her best to help you find them.

## Welcoming Congregation: The fine print

All text taken from the Unitarian Universalist  
Association website – [www.uua.org](http://www.uua.org)