

May 30, 2022

## UCC PRIDE MONTH CALL TO ACTION

### #TransJustice #UCCMovement

Beloveds, vulnerability is increasing in our midst – by the day, seemingly, even, by the hour. COVID is becoming endemic and so is legislation and policy being written that strips bodily autonomy from people and criminalizes trans experience, especially youth, trans families, and gender-affirming health care. More extreme policy preventing nonbinary identification is moving through state legislatures as well. **The stakes have never been higher.** Much harm has already been done and the mental health of LGBTQIA+ communities and in particular youth is of great concern.

The fear of being singled out and targeted, or the bullying some youth are subjected to takes a great toll. For queer adults as well, and even allies not connected to strong communities of care and support, it is overwhelming to think about making an impact on our own. The good news is we are not alone. We are a church full of justice-seeking, affirming communities. More than 1,760 of our churches have adopted open and affirming covenants with more in the process. We need everyone right now and are issuing this call to action for the month of PRIDE (June).

PRIDE month is a month of high visibility and affirmation for the LGBTQIA+ community. It is an opportunity for the United Church of Christ to demonstrate our mission to build a just world for all (which sometimes means great outfits and parades). We lament the harmful legislation that has already come into place. We will work to remove it and we believe the Love of God, the Hope of Jesus, and the Movement of the Holy Spirit will always be making way.

*Given what is at stake for our trans, nonbinary and queer kin, we are calling on UCC communities to center trans experience, advocacy, and care in your PRIDE celebrations this year*

### Center Trans Advocacy

PRIDE month in the United States began as a commemoration of the Stonewall Uprising, which occurred in New York City in June of 1969 and for which Black trans activist Marsha P. Johnson is credited with starting. Many local UCC churches have participated in local PRIDE events for years out of solidarity, love, and support for the queer and trans communities, some of whom make up our local congregations. This year, with the onslaught of policies and laws aimed at maligning and even criminalizing trans and nonbinary people and youth, in particular, **we urge you to connect with local organizers and get involved.** Seek out the LGBTQIA+ groups working to create affirming and life-giving policies such as was passed recently in Maryland. Be public and vocal as an ally. Many people wait to speak up until someone they know speaks up. Our siblings deserve justice and security, not silence in the face of State violence.

## Center Trans Experience

In addition to getting more involved in direct advocacy and engaging your community, continue to turn to and share the incredible educational resources the UCC offers. Resources are being posted at [ucc.org/trans](http://ucc.org/trans), which will include a toolkit by the 1<sup>st</sup> week of June. If you have not yet brought the [Our Whole Lives curriculum](#) to your church and community, now is a great time. Here is a [Facilitation Training Calendar](#).

## Center Trans Care

Finally, engaging the Open and Affirming (ONA) process as a way to learn more about people of trans and nonbinary experience, and strategies to strengthen the welcome, inclusion, and justice experienced in your church and community. Whether your church has been ONA for a long time, has just adopted its ONA covenant, or has not yet been through the process, there's always another step on the journey:

- Learn more about the ONA process at [openandaffirming.org](http://openandaffirming.org)
- Join the Thursdays for the Soul webinar on Thursday, June 16 at 3:30 pm Eastern for a discussion of the Open and Affirming process (It is part of the Just World Covenants on the series of the 3rd Thursday of the month.)

We can turn this tide together. Happy PRIDE!

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