

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website  
SMALL GROUP MINISTRY: WELCOMING CONGREGATION  
**Why Be A Welcoming Congregation?**

**Opening Words:**

“The Unitarian Universalist commitment to become a safe and affirming place for all persons regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity took on new meaning and intensity with the passage of a resolution at the 1989 General Assembly, instituting the Welcoming Congregation program. Acknowledging that every UU congregation reflects our society's homophobia to a degree, the delegates voted to initiate a sustained and systematic program designed to help congregations create a truly welcoming environment for all persons. In 1996, in order to be fully inclusive, the UUA recognized the need to revise the Welcoming Congregation program to address the concerns of transgender people. These "welcoming congregations" would:

- Be inclusive and expressive of the concerns of bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender persons at every level of congregational life.
- Celebrate the lives of all people and welcome same-gender couples, recognizing their committed relationships and equally affirming displays of caring and affection with regard to sexual orientation.
- Seek to nurture ongoing dialogue between bisexual, gay, heterosexual, lesbian, and transgender persons, and create deeper trust and sharing.
- Advocate for bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender people, attending to legislative developments and working 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.”

**Check-in/Sharing:** How is it with your spirit today?

**Topic:**

What does it mean to participate in a Welcoming Congregation?

What do you need to engage the Welcoming Congregation as part of your spiritual journey?

What do you have to offer in making your congregation (or other related group) welcoming?

**Likes and Wishes:** How was this session for you?

**Closing:**

The (Unitarian Universalist) Office (of Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian and Transgender Concerns) is guided by the vision that someday we will be able to put ourselves out of business and that oppression against bisexual, gay, lesbian, and/or transgender people, whether it be overt or subtle, will be a thing of the past.

From the Office of BGLT Concerns web site Home page

Helen Zidowecki, January 2009