



UCC churches receive June call to stand with transgender, nonbinary people

by [Staff Reports](#) | published on May 30, 2022

Saying “the stakes have never been higher,” a letter from the national setting of the United Church of Christ is calling the entire denomination to a special focus during Pride Month, June 2022. It urges all “UCC communities to center trans experience, advocacy and care in your Pride celebrations this year.” It cites an uptick in anti-trans legislation in many U.S. states and harm already done to “the mental health of LGBTQIA+ communities, and, in particular, youth.” It offers links to existing resources and promises more — including a toolkit and worship resources — to be posted at the UCC’s [Transgender-Nonbinary](#) page in early June. The May 30 letter, being distributed via the Conferences of the UCC, is signed by the Revs. Tracy Howe and Mike Schuenemeyer of [Justice and Local Church Ministries](#) and Andy Lang of the [Open and Affirming Coalition](#). Here is the text of the letter.

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).



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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 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 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, which will include a toolkit by the first 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, engage 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.
- Join a “Thursdays for the Soul” webinar — “[Open and Affirming: the Power of Covenant](#)” — on June 16 at 3:30 p.m. ET for a discussion of the ONA process. (It is part of the Just World Covenants series on the third Thursday of the month.)

We can turn this tide together. Happy PRIDE!

The Rev. Tracy Howe (she/they/womxn)

Minister for Congregational and Community Engagement

The Rev. Michael Schuenemeyer (he/him/his)

Minister and Team Leader for Health and Wholeness Advocacy

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