

What Does It Mean for UUTC to be “A Welcoming Congregation”?

Early in 2007 the Unitarian Universalists of Transylvania County formed the UUTC Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Welcoming Congregation Task Force under the umbrella of the UUTC Social Action Committee. The mission was “to provide education and opportunities for dialogue and introspection for the UUTC congregation to make an informed decision on whether to become an official Unitarian Universalist Welcoming Congregation for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community.” Although UUTC had always been welcoming, two years of study, programs, and dialogue aided by guidance from The Unitarian Universalist Association deepened our understanding of the issues and challenges of the LGBT community specifically.

On May 30, 2009, at the UUTC Annual Meeting, the vote was unanimously YES to make a commitment to be an official Unitarian Universalist Association recognized “Welcoming Congregation” to be intentional about our welcoming the LGBT community. The first guiding principle of Unitarian Universalism is the inherent worth and dignity of every human being. UUTC strives to welcome all persons of all ages, races, gender identities, sexual orientations, theological and political beliefs, socio-economic status, educational backgrounds, abilities and ethnicities. We began our in-depth study and learning how to fully welcome by focusing on the LGBT community. Our goal was to achieve a deep understanding of one area at a time (LGBT at this time) as opposed to “an inch deep” (shallow) understanding of the many areas.

“A Welcoming Congregation” sign was immediately placed outside by the road at UUTC as well as on all our printed material in hopes of letting the community know we were here as a safe place. At this time the original sign has been replaced by a rainbow flag sign to hopefully make our welcoming even better understood and seen. It is felt that showing this helps those who may be seeking a congregation to know that UUTC is a place that will be fully accepting and affirming.