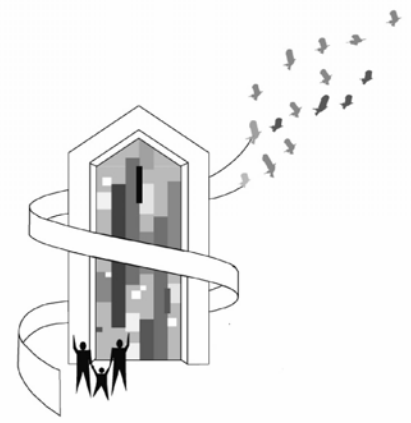


The First Congregational Church
of the United Church of Christ
Boulder, Colorado

OPEN & AFFIRMING COVENANT



**STATEMENT OF OPENNESS, INCLUSION AND AFFIRMATION
OF GAY AND LESBIAN PERSONS**

Adopted at the Congregational Meeting October 21, 1987

Made in God's image, as persons loved by God, we are called to fully accept ourselves and our sexuality. Recognizing that our Christian faith is the foundation of our values in human relationships, we envision a community in which all persons will come to know, celebrate and have confidence in themselves as sexual beings. Our sexuality is a gift of God which enriches our lives and deeply touches the reality of our own and others' humanity.

We affirm the traditional family, and we further recognize and support single persons, lesbian and gay relationships, single-parent families and extended families.

We also affirm that lesbian and gay persons are welcomed within our community and are expected and encouraged to share their talents and gifts in the life, liturgy and leadership of our congregation.

Living in Christ Jesus requires that we act so that lesbian and gay persons should not suffer from discrimination that threatens their basic human rights. In response, we call for justice for lesbian and gay people in our community and society.

THEREFORE, the First Congregational Church of the United Church of Christ, Boulder, Colorado, declares itself to be open and affirming of lesbian and gay persons in accordance with the resolution adopted by the 15th General Synod of the United Church of Christ.

POLICY REGARDING SAME-SEX COMMITMENT/UNION/COVENANT CEREMONIES

First Statement passed June 4, 1997

We, the Board of Spiritual Life of The First Congregational Church, UCC of Boulder, Colorado, affirm the relationships of gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons by endorsing their formal rite of commitment. We celebrate with our brothers and sisters who may wish to express their union before God and all persons.

The essence of union between persons and their same-sex partners is a covenanted commitment that has its foundation in the faithfulness of God's love. The ceremony of union is the glad occasion on which two people unite as a couple and exchange their covenanted promises. A union celebrated in our church is a service of worship offered to God in recognition of the couple's covenant.

The minister presiding acts as the official representative of the church and gives the union the church's blessing. The congregation joins in affirming the union and in offering continuing support and thanksgiving for the couple and the family they form.

On December 2, 1998, the statement was revised to read as follows:

We, the Board of Spiritual Life of The First Congregational Church, UCC of Boulder, Colorado, affirm the relationships of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons by endorsing their formal rite of commitment. We celebrate with our brothers and sisters who may wish to express their union before God and all persons.

The essence of union between same-sex partners is a covenanted commitment that has its foundation in the faithfulness of God's love. The ceremony of union is the glad occasion on which two people unite as a couple and exchange their covenanted promises. A union celebrated in our church is a service of worship offered to God in recognition of the couple's covenant.

The minister presiding acts as the official representative of the church and gives the union the church's blessing. The congregation joins in affirming the union and in offering continuing support and thanksgiving for the couple and the family they form.

(The second document adds the term "transgender" to the initial sentence.)