

OPEN AND AFFIRMING

At its June 19-20, 2008 annual meeting, the UCC's Southern California – Nevada Conference adopted a statement reaffirming its commitment to equal marriage rights for couples regardless of gender. Among the delegates voting to reaffirm this commitment were members of Diamond Bar UCC. Please call Rev. Jeanne if you would like to talk more about holding your wedding at Diamond Bar UCC.

Open and Affirming Statement - Diamond Bar UCC (Adopted January 20, 2001)

The Diamond Bar United Church of Christ is a diverse community who knows the joy of having been accepted and affirmed by God and by one another. We are a people of different ages, family configurations, education, race, ethnicity, ability, and sexual orientations as well as varied theological, political, and socio-economic backgrounds. In our diversity we find strength and an understanding of the inclusiveness of God's love. This understanding affirms that, although we are many members, we are one body in Christ; called to love one another, do justice, bring release to the oppressed, and walk humbly with our God.

We are witnesses to the warm, welcoming, genuine, embracing, and inclusive nature of God's love, and we believe this love is a way to satisfy our great human need for belonging, welcome, and acceptance. Seeking to be persons that reveal God's love as compassionate, reconciling, healing, freeing and unconditional we celebrate the image of God in every person, rejoicing in the sacredness of life, and affirming all relationships of support that are founded in the principles of love and justice. We believe sexuality to be a gift from God that enriches our lives, significantly nurtures our humanity, and is a blessing through which we may experience more fully the wholeness God intends.

We commit to a progressive ministry that heals the brokenness we experience within ourselves, in our relationships with others, and in our connection with God. We know many people have not experienced the church as a place of welcome. Our actions have fallen short of our words. There are people who, because of their differences, have experienced rejection and ridicule, prejudice and exclusion, oppression and injustice. We condemn all acts of discrimination and violence (including physical, verbal, emotional, social, political, and legal) against persons because they may be gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered or straight; just as we condemn such acts against people because of race, age, gender, religion, ethnicity, or physical/mental ability.

Therefore, we, the members of Diamond Bar United Church of Christ, declare ourselves to be an Open and Affirming Church, joyfully welcoming and accepting people of every sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, economic status, gender, age, or personal ability into the worship of God, and the full life and mission of the church, including membership, leadership, and employment. We are here to bear witness to the inclusiveness of God's grace and love.

The Story of ONA at our Church

Diamond Bar Congregational Church unanimously voted to adopt our Open and Affirming Statement, which joyfully welcomes gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered persons into the full life and mission of the church. The vote took place during the congregation's annual meeting on Saturday, January 20, 2001.

During the previous year, the church was involved in a process of study and reflection focused on the issues of welcoming gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered (GLBT) persons into the full life of the church. This process led to the development of the statement. The church joins over 400 congregations in the United Church of Christ who have adopted similar statements.

The congregation recognizes that many churches have not been (and continue to not be) open and affirming of GLBT persons and their family and friends. This church wants to make clear in a public way that GLBT persons, their family and friends are welcomed, affirmed and invited to participate in all facets of the church's life, including membership, leadership and employment. The statement not only expresses welcome and affirmation, but it also condemns "all acts of discrimination and violence against persons because they may be gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered or straight; just as we condemn such acts against people because of race, age, gender, religion, ethnicity, or physical/mental ability."

The congregation has demonstrated its commitment to the values of the statement when they called The Rev. Mike Schuenemeyer, an openly gay man, to be their Pastor in June, 1998. Diamond Bar UCC was awarded the Oliver and Eleanor Powell award by the UC Coalition for LGBT Concerns (So. Calif. Nev. Conference Chapter), in June, 2001.

Diamond Bar UCC is a member of the Southern California Nevada Conference, United Church of Christ (USA) which has a regional membership of 22,000 people. With national offices in Cleveland, OH, the United Church of Christ (USA) has over 1.4 million members in over 6,000 congregations throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. The United Church of Christ was created by a merger of the Congregational Christian Church and the Evangelical and Reformed Church in 1957.