

## What Does it Really Mean to be Open and Affirming?

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In 1985 the Fifteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ adopted a resolution calling on all United Church of Christ churches to declare themselves "Open and Affirming." This General Synod action "...encourages a policy of non-discrimination in employment, volunteer service and membership policies with regard to sexual orientation; encourages associations, Conferences and all related organizations to adopt a similar policy; and encourages the congregations of the United Church of Christ to adopt a non-discrimination policy and a Covenant of Openness and Affirmation of persons of lesbian, gay and bisexual orientation within the community of faith."

Blah, blah, blah...

What does it really mean to be Open and Affirming? There are many ways to categorize human beings. Some of these, such as race, gender, sexual orientation or economic status may be considered significant by some people, but in reality have no bearing whatsoever on a person's humanity. We are all children of God. To be Open and Affirming is to acknowledge this truth, to welcome everyone to the church without regard for any external characteristic, and to work for justice for all people everywhere. This church values diversity and hopes to provide a means for each person to contribute to the world in a way that is an expression of who they are.

We'll see you in church.

