



United Church of Christ

UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Called Out eNews - September 2009

UCC Coalition for LGBT Concerns in Leadership Transition

The UCC
Coalition
for LGBT
Concerns



God's Extravagant Welcome

The Board of the UCC Coalition for LGBT Concerns has been hard at work on the Executive Director transition the Coalition is currently facing. There are three key issues the Board is addressing:

- Presenting a slate of nominees to the membership for the national Search Committee for a new Executive Director of the Coalition. The Search Committee is to be elected by the Coalition membership on a national conference call meeting, scheduled for 8pm (Eastern), October 26, 2009. Members of the Search Committee will participate in the Board's ongoing strategic-planning process, create the profile for the position, qualify and interview candidates, and present a final candidate to the membership as early as the next National Gathering in July 2010.
- Search for and call an Interim Director. The interim job description is nearing completion and the search for qualified candidates is underway.
- Fill three vacancies on the Board.

The Board has been meeting twice a month since August and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

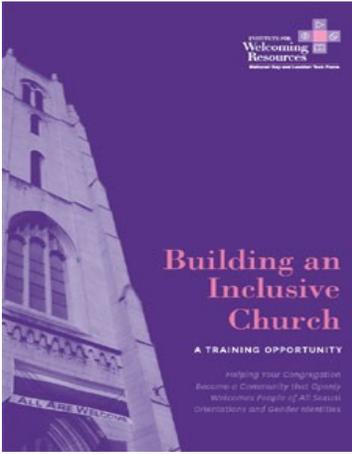
Information and forms related to the nomination process for both the Search Committee and the Board of Directors are available online at the Coalition web site:

<http://www.uccoalition.org/>

ONA Training-Bay Area

October 23-25, Eden UCC, Hayward, CA

On October 23-25, there will be an open and affirming (ONA) training at Eden UCC in Hayward, CA. For churches that are in the process of becoming ONA or for churches that are simply thinking about the process, this training provides you and your congregation with the resources. The training will guide you through the process of becoming a community and a congregation that "openly welcomes people of all sexual orientations and gender identities".



This is an ecumenical training and in addition to the UCC participants, may also include participants from the Reconciling Ministries Network of the United Methodist Church, Lutherans Concerned, and More Light Presbyterians. All are welcome, even if you or your church is not a member of these churches or organizations. Look forward to an intense, spiritually enriching and transformational weekend!

For more information and to register go to:

- [Information Packet](#) (pdf)
- [Register & Pay Online](#)
- [Register & Pay by Mail](#)

For the current schedule of all ecumenical trainings, click [here](#).

Discrimination in the Workplace

The Employment Non-discrimination Act (ENDA) is on the move in Congress

There is still no federal law protecting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals from employment discrimination. It is still legal in 29 states fire or refuse to hire someone simply because of his or her sexual orientation. 38 states laws have yet to pass legislation protecting people from discrimination based on their gender identity. Judging workers solely on their ability to do the job and not on their sexual orientation or gender identity is a basic civil right. But currently, many people in the community do not feel safe in the workplace because of their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity and some have been fired because of who they are.

The Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), H.R. 3017, focuses on this issue and will provide protection to members of LGBT community. ENDA would prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of real or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity. It would create protections for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people that are similar to those available under existing federal discrimination laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Right now people are protected against discrimination due to their race, religion, sex, national origin age and disability. If ENDA is passed, this would also bring an end to employment discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

It is critical to note that ENDA (H.R. 3017) respects the rights of religious organizations to make employment decisions consistent with their faith traditions, even when that would exclude LGBT workers. Thus, ENDA is no threat to religious liberty and does not in any way diminish the strong protections for people of faith under the First Amendment and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This legislation respects the rights of religious organizations while ensuring that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people are protected from baseless discrimination in the workplace.

An important and historical Congressional hearing occurred on Wednesday, September 23. To read the testimony or access the archived Webcast, click [here](#). Please contact your Representative to urge them to support H.R. 3017.

A Step Toward Marriage Equality

Respect for Marriage Act to repeal DOMA (Defense of Marriage Act) introduced in Congress



Tell Congress: it's time to repeal DOMA.

Just this past week though, Representative Jerrold Nadler (D-NY) has introduced a repeal of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) into Congress, namely called the "Respect for Marriage Act" (H.R.3567). LGBT Advocacy groups and 91 co-sponsors in the House, are already on board supporting this effort. Please contact your U.S. Representative to urge their support for the repeal of DOMA.

Enacted during the Clinton administration, DOMA defines marriage as "a legal union between one man and one woman" The act goes even further to say that individual states do not have to honor same sex marriages from other states. DOMA prevents the federal government from recognizing legal marriages from Connecticut, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont and the 18,000+ same sex marriages in California.

DOMA is unjust and unfair, denying legally married same sex couples the same benefits as legally married heterosexual couples. It effects everything from how couples may file their tax returns to social security benefits and more.

Although former President Bill Clinton signed DOMA into law back in 1996, he recognizes that times have changed. He is now supports DOMA's repeal, saying, "When the Defense of Marriage Act was passed, gay couples could not marry anywhere in the United States, or the world, for that matter. Thirteen years later, the fabric of our country has changed, and so should this policy."

To The Polls!

Maine & Washington—marriage/domestic partnership votes on Nov. 3

On November 3, Maine and Washington will be voting on some very important issues concerning marriage equality. Many states are struggling with the issue of marriage equality in their legislature.



Join the effort to defeat Issue 1 in Maine

This past May, Maine became the 6th state to pass legislation giving same-sex couples the right to marry. Conservative groups, including many of the same players who supported Proposition 8 in California, are seeking to repeal the law by ballot initiative. Question 1 is now before

the voters in Maine to decide if same-sex couples will continue to have the right to marry.

[Equality Maine](#) has an incredible coalition fighting Question 1 with their [No on 1 campaign](#). They are carrying out a huge nation-wide volunteer drive. Even if you don't live in Maine, you can go on a [Volunteer Vacation](#) to fight for equality. You can also join the [National Phone for Maine Action](#) on Sunday, September 27th. Volunteers participate in a training conference call prior to the Day of Action. They've also launched a [great series of ads](#).

With Maine already allowing same-sex marriage, it is very important that voters fight to keep this legislation in tact. Voters in Maine supporting marriage equality should vote "no" on Question 1 on November 3.



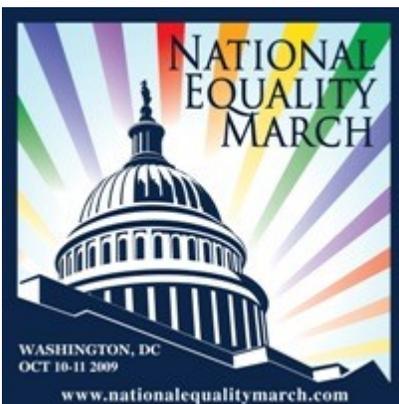
Washington State faces R-71

The State of Washington will face R-71 on November 3, a referendum concerning domestic partnership legislation which was signed into law earlier this year. The referendum places the matter before Washington's voters, asking whether the bill should be passed. If passed, it will give most of the same legal rights as married heterosexual couples. The referendum made it on the ballot by the narrowest of margins.

[Washington Families Standing Together](#) is now focusing their efforts to pass the referendum and thereby enact the expansion of domestic partner benefits to equality apply state law to all families in Washington. They will no doubt face stiff opposition from conservative organizations wanting to deny these benefits to same sex couples.

It could get confusing in the "silly season" leading up to the election, so if you vote in Washington (or know someone who does) just remember, to support the domestic partnership law support the referendum and vote, yes, the bill should be "approved."

For more information, go to: <http://approverefendum71.org/>.



National March on Washington

People from all across America will be marching on Capitol Hill this October 10-11 to fight for their civil rights. Members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community have been struggling to gain equal protection of their rights protected by the 14th Amendment. Marching in Washington D.C. will give the LGBT community the opportunity to let other people know about their fight to gain equal civil rights

Throughout the entire weekend there will be workshops and trainings for people of all ages and from all communities. On Saturday afternoon, there is a training regarding the relationship between faith communities and LGBT justice campaigns. There are also different rallies and vigils to pay tribute to people who have been lost on their fight to equal rights. That night the Matthew Shepard Foundation is having a fundraiser in hopes of also bringing awareness to this cause.

If you are interested in more information regarding the National March on Washington, you can visit <http://www.equalityacrossamerica.org/>. Even if you are not able to attend the march, this website also has a wealth of information regarding equal rights for the LGBT community.

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