

Called Out eNews - December 2009

[2009 Year in Review](#)

The correct link to the 2009 Year in Review is: <http://www.ucc.org/lgbt/2009-year-in-review.html>



Throughout this past year, there have been struggles and triumphs, trainings and marches and there hope to be a lot more in the year to come. We began the year challenging Proposition 8 in California, the ballot measure that stripped same sex couples of the right to marry in the state. We saw marriage equality happen in several states, such as Vermont, New Hampshire and Iowa. In June, we gathered for General Synod 27 in Grand Rapids, MI. One resolution

entitled, *Affirming Diversity/Multi-Cultural Education in Public Schools*, was passed by an overwhelming majority. We also saw movement in Congress with various pieces of pro-LGBT legislation, including hate crimes, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, the repeal of Don't Ask Don't Tell, and the repeal of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA).

To read the full article, click [here](http://www.ucc.org/lgbt/2009-year-in-review.html) (<http://www.ucc.org/lgbt/2009-year-in-review.html>).



UCC Coalition for LGBT Concerns' Board expands criteria for new Open and Affirming (ONA) Statements

God's Extravagant Welcome

At its fall meeting in Cleveland, the Coalition Board voted to expand the criteria for **new** ONA statements to include gender identity and gender expression, effective July 14, 2010 (National Gathering). The Coalition has been actively encouraging the inclusion of gender identity and gender expression for many years and views this action as another step in living more fully into the values of extravagant welcome. The policy does not affect the current listing of local churches or other settings prior to July 14, 2010.

The text of the resolution adopted by the Coalition Board:

Whereas the General Synod of the United Church of Christ voted to include transgender people in the full life and ministry of the church in 2003, and the Coalition has encouraged transgender inclusion since 1997, in celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Open and Affirming resolution and in order to more fully live God's extravagant welcome, the Coalition expands its criteria for new ONA Statements to include gender identity and gender expression effective at National Gathering, July 14, 2010.

Resources for studying gender identity and gender expression:

- [Call Me Malcolm](http://www.ucc.org/lgbt/callmemalcolm.html) (UCC) (<http://www.ucc.org/lgbt/callmemalcolm.html>)

- [Transgendering Faith](http://act.ucc.org/site/Ecommerce/1089238412?VIEW_PRODUCT=true&product_id=13585&store_id=1401) (UCC, Pilgrim Press)
(http://act.ucc.org/site/Ecommerce/1089238412?VIEW_PRODUCT=true&product_id=13585&store_id=1401)
- [Trans Gendered: Theology, Ministry and Communities of Faith](http://act.ucc.org/site/Ecommerce/1089238412?VIEW_PRODUCT=true&product_id=13318&store_id=1401) (UCC, Pilgrim Press)
(http://act.ucc.org/site/Ecommerce/1089238412?VIEW_PRODUCT=true&product_id=13318&store_id=1401)
- [Coalition Transgender Pocket](http://act.ucc.org/site/Ecommerce/1089238412?VIEW_PRODUCT=true&product_id=15850&store_id=1401) (included in the [ONA Study Packet](#))
(http://act.ucc.org/site/Ecommerce/1089238412?VIEW_PRODUCT=true&product_id=15850&store_id=1401)
- [transACTION](http://www.welcomingresources.org/transaction_final.pdf) [pdf] (The Task Force)
(http://www.welcomingresources.org/transaction_final.pdf)
- [A time to seek](http://www.religioust institute.org/sites/default/files/study_guides/timetoseekfinal.pdf) [pdf] (Religious Institute)
(http://www.religioust institute.org/sites/default/files/study_guides/timetoseekfinal.pdf)
- [Gender Identity and Our Faith Communities: A Congregational Guide for Transgender Advocacy](http://www.hrc.org/documents/Gender-Identity-and-our-Faith-Communities_2008-12.pdf) [pdf] (Human Rights Campaign) (http://www.hrc.org/documents/Gender-Identity-and-our-Faith-Communities_2008-12.pdf)

Welcoming Church/Open and Affirming Trainings

This training has been designed specifically with local churches and their leaders in mind. In offering these trainings, the [Health and Wholeness Advocacy Office](http://www.ucc.org/lgbt) (www.ucc.org/lgbt) is a partner with the [UCC Coalition for LGBT Concerns](http://www.uccoalition.org) (www.uccoalition.org), along with the welcoming church programs of several other denominations. Each training will explore topics which will help you become a more effective leader on issues related to human sexuality and gender identity for the purpose of helping a local church discern God's call to live the values of ONA.

Participation in the trainings is ecumenical and there is time in each training devoted to denominationally specific information, especially related to learning about resources, planning and other things particular to the denomination of the participant.

Topics include:

- Faith-based community organizing techniques
- Congregational conflict theory and resolution
- Managing change in congregations well
- Effective strategies for helping congregations discern the call to be welcoming
- Building relationships for change
- Dealing with difficult conversations around biblical material, stereotypes, the "b" and the "t" questions, and other areas of concern
- Opportunity to build relationships with others who share your concerns
- Personal spiritual enrichment
- Opportunity for growth and challenge
- Intense few days of hard work, laughter, and fun

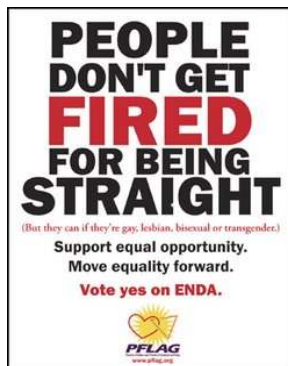
Click [here](http://www.welcomingresources.org/communityorg.htm) for more information about the trainings, including the training schedule.
<http://www.welcomingresources.org/communityorg.htm>

download the *Building an Inclusive Church* toolkit
<http://www.welcomingresources.org/welcomingtoolkit.pdf>

Legislative Updates

Washington DC City Council votes for marriage equality

The Washington D.C. City Council voted for marriage equality with a vote of 11-2. The Religious Freedom and Civil Marriage Equality Amendment Act of 2009 would further extend marriage equality legislation for same-sex couples. This past July, Washington D.C. has recognized same-sex marriages from other jurisdictions. This amendment act would allow same-sex couples to marry in the city itself. With this legislation, clergy and religious organizations would be ensured that they are not required to perform same-sex marriages or accommodate same-sex couples in their organization. Mayor Fenty, mayor of Washington D.C. has said that he will sign it into law.



Progress with the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) (H.R. 3017/S. 1584)

In November, ENDA moved to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions. Hearings were held although they have pushed back the vote for a few weeks. The House of Representatives had their Education and Labor Committee hearing back in September.

ENDA is the Employment Non-Discrimination Act that protects all lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. Make sure one of the first things they hear about is the importance of an Employment Non-Discrimination Act that includes sexual orientation and gender identity

and expression. Here are three things you can do:

1. Take Action

Click [here](#) to join the UCC's Justice Peace Action Network and take action in support of ENDA.

<https://secure3.convio.net/ucc/site/Advocacy?cmd=display&page=UserAction&id=460&JServSessionIdr004=b2xf7xkie4.app332a>

2. In DC, make their phone ring!

Call the Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121 and have them connect you to your Representative (based on your zip code). Tell them: "I am a constituent, a person of faith and I would like you to please tell Representative [*your Representative's name*] that I strongly support the Employment Non-Discrimination Act that would ban discrimination against all lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people."

Then, call back and leave messages with your two Senators too!

3. At home, set up a visit!

Request an in-person meeting for you and other community members with your two Senators and your Representative (or their staffs) in their home district offices. You can call the district offices to request these meetings but they often want you to fax a meeting request. To find contact info for district offices, go to <http://www.senate.gov/> and <http://www.house.gov/>.

4. Let [United ENDA](http://www.unitedenda.org/) know about your meeting! (<http://www.unitedenda.org/>)

United ENDA is a coalition of 100s of organizations, including the UCC Office for LGBT Concerns, working to get an ENDA that includes gender identity and expression. United

ENDA is tracking the meetings to learn where this new Congress stands. Click [here](http://www.unitedenda.org) (www.unitedenda.org) go to fill out the Lobby Report Form available from United ENDA. It's the best way to let us know how your meeting went and whether your Representative and Senators expressed support.



Matthew Shepard Act and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act (H.R. 2647 & S. 909)

The Hate Crimes Prevention Act has seen success this year. In April, the House of Representatives passed the Matthew Shepard Act. There were many challenges though to move the legislation forward. The Senate was finally able to attach the hate crime amendment (The Matthew Shepard Hate Crimes Prevention Act) to the Fiscal Year 2010 Department of Defense Authorization bill. The bill passed and was signed into law by President Obama on October 28.



New York Senate Vote Fails on Marriage Equality Legislation

Recently New York Senators voted on a marriage equality bill for same-sex couples. The current New York state law does not allow same-sex couples to have the same protections and rights as different-sex couples. When the votes were tallied, the senate voted against the bill, 24 to 38. It was a very disappointing vote for all New York families.

There are some successes though that came from this vote. The Executive Director of the Empire State Pride Agenda, New York's statewide lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) civil rights and advocacy organization, commented on this. "While we are disappointed by today's vote, we are pleased that the issue of marriage equality at last was debated in the New York State Senate. We had long called for a public debate on this matter so we could determine who was truly on our side. It is a step forward for our democratic process in New York that a debate and vote have now occurred. Now we know where we stand, and where we need to concentrate our efforts in the future." The campaigning continues as strategic work begins in the Senate offices that voted against the legislation.

UCC churches and leaders involved in Fall ballot measures

Question 1 in Maine Results



On November 4, voters in Maine elected to overturn the state's marriage equality law. Throughout this "No on 1" campaign, many people throughout the country, including many UCC clergy, worked very hard to keep marriage equality in the state. In the end, the law was overturned. Rev. David Gaewski, the Maine Conference Minister, shares with us these words after the vote.

"I write this knowing and respecting that as a community we are not of one mind. Yet there are many among us who this morning are disappointed, some of us devastated.

"In a nearby country there was a powerful Judge who did not care for anyone except himself and his own. In the same country there lived a poor woman. She had no money.

She had no social position. Many thought her unclean and despised her, and her kind. Still day after day, night after night she went to the judge's house, even after the court had closed, and pounded on his door yelling: "Give me justice." She did not say, "Give me what I want." She said, "Give me justice!" She did not go to the Judge's door once, not twice, but many times she went. Certainly others thought her mad for her persistence and for one in her position to demand anything of anyone. Still, she went to the door and knocked, pounded, for justice. One day, the unjust Judge tired of her. He said, I do not respect you nor do I fear God, but since you keep me awake on some nights, and on others you do not allow me to enjoy the company of my friends, I will give you what you want, just leave me alone from now on. And justice was granted."

For those who work for justice, weariness can not impede its pursuit. If it does, then the value of life itself is lost. And for the follower of Christ, the value of life is everything. Without it, we are nothing. May you find the strength to keep knocking."

Referendum 71 Results in Washington



Voters in Washington have something to rejoice about. The domestic partnership law, Referendum 71, was passed! This allows registered same-sex and senior domestic partners to have the legal rights, benefits and obligations that all married couples have under Washington state law.

Several UCC local churches in the Pacific Northwest Conference were involved in the campaign for "Approve Referendum 71". Many held a variety of education events and got their voices out there; from movie screenings to panel discussions to statements in local church newsletters, they were actively involved in showing their support for marriage equality. A job well done!

Victory in Kalamazoo, MI

On November 4, voters in Kalamazoo, Michigan chose to support Ordinance 1856. This ordinance prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. The measure was won by a vote of 62 to 38. Twelve states and Washington D.C. prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. The states include California, Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont and Washington.

Please remember our ministry in your giving. [Click here to make a gift today.](http://act.ucc.org/site/Donation2?df_id=1228&1228.donation=form1)

Wishing you and yours a blessed Christmas and Holiday season!

*Rev. Michael Schuenemeyer
and
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