

LGBT Ministries at General Synod 26, Hartford, CT

June 21 – 27, 2007

Thursday (June 21)

- 7:30pm “Is it Well with Your Soul” Worship Service (Hartford Civic Center)

Friday-Monday (June 22 – 25) -- Exhibit Hall

- Health and Wholeness Advocacy display (with Wider Church Ministries)
- UCC Coalition booth
- Pilgrim Press Book Store (Look for book signing of Coming Out Young and Faithful)
- After-hours “Safe Space” for youth (every evening, Univ. of Hartford)

Friday (June 22)

- 12noon-2.00pm Luncheon: UCC Coalition for LGBT Concerns (Hilton Hotel, Grand Ballroom East)

Saturday (June 23) Synod in the City

- 10.30 – 12 noon Workshop: “Open and Affirming: Why and How” (Capital College, Rm 206)
- 10.30 – 12 noon Workshop: “Our Stories” – LGBT youth and young adults share their coming out stories (Capital College, Rm 1024)
- 10.30 – 12.30pm Film: “For the Bible Tells Me So” video screening and discussion with Danial Karlslake, Director (Place @ Market Street)
- 12.15 – 1.45pm Workshop: “Sexuality Education in the Church”(Capital College, Rm 315)
- 12.15 – 1.45pm Workshop: “Youth Speak Out on Sexuality and Faith” (Capital College, Rm 317)
- 12.15 – 1.45pm Workshop: “Transgender – What Does that Have to Do with the Church?” (Capital College, Rm 703)
- 12.15 – 1.45pm Workshop: “We’re ONA – Now What?” (Capital College, Rm 703)
- 12.15 – 1.45pm Workshop: “Biblical Self-Defense for Youth” (Capital College, Rm 206)
- 3.30 – 4.15pm Speaker: “Harry Knox and the Human Rights Campaign”(Civic Center Assembly Hall)

Sunday (June 24)

- 5.00-7.00pm Wider Church Ministries Dinner (Hartford Civic Center, Assembly Hall)

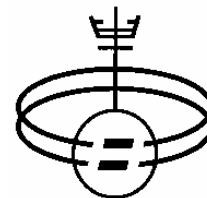
Monday (June 25)

- 12noon-2.00pm “Health: Let it Shine” Lunch (Hilton Hotel, Connecticut Room)

Revisiting Marriage Equality

Written by: Rev. Lori Tisher

Two years have passed since the “Marriage Equality for All” resolution was adopted by the General Synod of the United Church of Christ. And now, two new resolutions on marriage will be considered by delegates at the 26th General Synod in Hartford, CT, June 22 – 26, 2007. Both resolutions call for the church to engage in serious, respectful and prayerful discussion about marriage and both ask the General Synod to take back its support for marriage equality. They can be found at the General Synod section of the UCC web at: <http://www.ucc.org/synod/resolutions>. The proposed resolution entitled “A Reaffirmation of Marriage Based on the Word of God” says that the 25th



[continued on back ...]



Revisiting Marriage [continued from front]

General Synod compromised the UCC's core principles and was in error when it adopted the resolution in support of marriage equality. The resolution calls on General Synod 26 to reaffirm what it believes is the scriptural definition of marriage as being between one man and one woman. It also calls on Wider Church Ministries, a covenanted ministry of the United Church of Christ, to produce study materials that agree with its perspective of the "non-secular, purely scriptural perspective on the covenantal relationship of marriage as defined by the Word of God."

The other proposed resolution on marriage takes a different tack to the same end. Entitled, "A Reaffirmation of the Historic and Ecumenical Christian Perspective on Marriage" uses the logic that because the historic church has always held marriage to be between one man and one woman, and because the UCC Constitution claims the heritage of faith as its own (with reference to the reformed tradition), that the General Synod by adopting the resolution supporting marriage equality has violated its own theological heritage as well as its ecumenical commitments. This proposed resolution also claims the background material of the General Synod 25 resolution is in error when it says, "it is not possible to rely exclusively on scripture for understanding marriage today" (line 66 of the GS 25 marriage equality resolution). Like the other resolution, it calls on Wider Church Ministries to produce study materials that fairly and accurately represent a diversity of theological perspectives on the covenantal relationship of marriage.

It is not unusual for General Synod to consider resolutions asking delegates to reverse what has become a clear course of LGBT welcome, inclusion and participation in the full life and ministry of the church. However, it would be unprecedented for any such resolution to pass. That is not reason, though, to disregard these proposed resolutions. As these proposed resolutions come before the delegates of General Synod in Hartford, CT, it is an opportunity to share our stories, and create safe space for dialogue, remembering to keep God's gracious presence at the center of all that we do.

Rev. Lori Tisher is currently serves as Intern for the Health and Wholeness Advocacy Office, in Wider Church Ministries of the United Church of Christ.

The Matthew Shepard Hate Crimes Act



The Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act (also known as the Matthew Shepard Act) gives the Federal Justice Department the power to investigate and prosecute bias-motivated violence in crimes where the perpetrator has selected the victim because of the person's actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, gender, disability, *sexual orientation, or gender identity*. On May 3, 2007, the House of Representatives passed this legislation by a vote of 237-180. The bill now goes to the U.S. Senate. If the Senate passes this bill with a broad enough majority, a presidential veto may be discouraged. Since 1991 more than 100,000 hate crime offenses have been reported to the FBI, with 7,163 reported in 2005, the FBI's most recent reporting period. In the face of such statistics, we need, more than ever, to ensure that all of our citizens are protected against senseless hate violence. A Kaiser Family Foundation poll released in November 2001 showed that 73 percent of Americans support hate crimes legislation that includes sexual orientation (www.hrc.org).

Show your support of this legislation by contacting your senators today at

http://www.hrcactioncenter.org/campaign/matthew_shepard!

To subscribe to this e-newsletter: <http://qa3.org/ucc/join/tcl>

For more information:

Rev. Mike Schuenemeyer, Executive
Office for Health and Wholeness Advocacy
Wider Church Ministries, United Church of Christ
700 Prospect Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44115
Phone: (216) 736-3217
E-mail: schuenem@ucc.org



