

WHY GIVE OUT CONDOMS ?

Because we believe it sends the right message.

- Sexuality is a gift from God to be shared with love and responsibility.
- Loving carefully is a moral responsibility.
- We affirm abstinence and acknowledge people do have choices.
- No matter the age, abstinence is always a viable choice.
- Safer sexual behavior is a matter of life and death.
- When people choose to engage in sex, we affirm safer sexual behavior.

The presence of condoms?

- is an educational tool that evokes questions and encourages discussion
- does not “promote” sexual activity
- takes sexual behavior seriously
- promotes honesty in sexual relationships
- provides opportunities to open conversations that can save lives

IT SAVES LIVES!

UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST



“Why do we distribute condoms?”

Because it sends the right message: Loving carefully is a moral responsibility.

- We believe that the practice of safer sex behavior is a matter of life and death. We make condoms available because we have “chosen life, so that we and our children may live.”
- Human beings are sexual beings. Sex is a gift from God, to be shared with love and responsibility. In a world with HIV/AIDS, safer sex is more loving and responsible — toward oneself and one’s partner — than unprotected sex.
- We believe that people must have accurate safer sex information and access to the means of protection. Condom availability does not “promote” sexual activity, but is an important part of sex education that promotes honesty in sexual relationships and acknowledges that people do have choices about their sexual behavior. We support informed choice.
- We affirm abstinence and monogamy as behaviors individuals may choose. No matter the age or sexual experience of the person choosing it, abstinence is always a viable choice. Condom availability does not undermine abstinence or monogamy as appropriate Christian behavioral choices. It does not undermine effective HIV infection prevention. However, when people make other choices, we affirm safer sexual behavior in order to save lives.
- Young people should be able to get their sex education from their families and their churches.* But the fact is that most young people learn about sex from their peers, who are usually ill informed and confused themselves. Many adults feel uncomfortable talking about sex. Many pastors feel ill-equipped to discuss sex openly. Many young people have no adult role models who will engage them in informed discussion about sexual behavior and choices.

- Condoms are educational tools. Their presence in our educational displays provides opportunities to open conversations that can save lives. It encourages questions and discussions with our staff and volunteers who are prepared to respond with factual and up-to-date information. The condoms are a sign that we take sexuality seriously as a part of human life and that we endorse all options for preventing HIV infection.

Historical Note:

The Health and Wholeness Advocacy office of Wider Church Ministries has assumed the responsibility for implementing this policy, which is based on the policy adopted by the United Church AIDS Network (UCAN) Leadership Team, July 1, 1995. UCAN made condoms accessible as part of its HIV/AIDS educational efforts at UCC General Synods since 1989, the year in which UCAN was founded. In 1987, the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries distributed its first AIDS Resource Packet to delegates at the Sixteenth General Synod. Condoms were made accessible at that Synod through the pioneering efforts of the United Church of Christ Coalition for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Concerns.

** The United Church of Christ AIDS Curriculum for Christian education settings, “Affirming Persons-Saving Lives,” is an excellent, comprehensive resource for local churches. It is available from United Church of Christ Resources. The cost is \$12.00 for shipping/handling. To order, call: 1-800-537-3394.*