

UUA Monthly Tidings

July 2019

Dear Congregation Members,

Aren't We Welcoming Already? is a common refrain in Unitarian Universalist (UU) congregations. My answer to this question is always, "Yes!". In the grand scheme of faith, we are welcoming — if by welcoming we mean non-hostile. If by welcoming we mean that queer people may breathe our air and drink our water, or if by welcoming we mean flying the rainbow flag and marching in our local Pride parade, then yes, we are welcoming.

But if by welcoming we mean that we are still using language and frameworks we learned about the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community thirty years ago then, well...we might not be so welcoming. [While approximately 813 UU congregations \(75%\) are officially designated as Welcoming Congregations, only 35 have ever renewed their Welcoming Congregation status.](#)

As a result, queer youth and young adults are questioning the commitment of Welcoming Congregations that have been slow to embrace pronouns or heed the cries of trans UUs, 72% of whom [report](#) feeling as though their congregation is not completely accepting of them. These disconcerting challenges to queer and trans existence, both within and beyond UUism, attest to our need for new ways of practicing LGBTQ welcome and inclusion.

In 2019, the UUA's Multicultural Ministries office launched the new Five Practices of Welcome Renewal for UU congregations. These are five benchmarks that every

congregation can integrate into congregational life in order to ensure that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, asexual, two-spirit, genderqueer, non-binary, and the like feel fully welcomed, centered, and embraced in UU congregations.

The Five Practices of Welcome Renewal are: 1) becoming a welcoming congregation; 2) holding welcoming worship services; 3) honoring welcoming days of observance; 4) experiencing a welcoming congregation module; 5) supporting a welcoming project.

Welcoming Congregations will be required to meet these benchmarks annually in order to remain current as a Welcoming Congregation.

To learn more about The Five Practices of Welcome Renewal, [attend an online orientation](#), visit www.uua.org/lgbtq/welcome, or contact lgbtq@uua.org.

In faith,

Rev. Michael J. Crumpler

UUA Executive Vice President

Rev. Michael J. Crumpler was ordained to Reverend in the United Church of Christ. Michael lives in Harlem and is very active in social justice ministry at the historic Judson Memorial Church of New York City and the surrounding queer community.

