



# Open and Affirming Coalition: workshops and events for churches

## WORKSHOPS

*These workshops can be offered individually or in a series during your Conference or Association Annual Meeting, or at a regional ONA event in a local church or seminary.*

### **1. Open and Affirming: What's It All About?**

This workshop is for congregations curious about the Open and Affirming movement in the United Church of Christ, and looking for ways to begin a conversation about how the church can welcome LGBTQ seekers. Includes stories about lives that were transformed by LGBTQ-affirming churches. A commitment to begin an ONA process is not a requirement for this workshop.

### **2. The Bible and LGBTQ Affirmation**

Out of 31,000 verses in the Bible, just seven are often a stumbling block for churches that want to welcome and support their LGBTQ members and neighbors. But what else does the Bible say about our relationships with each other and with God? How can the Bible help a church explore the basic values that inform a conversation about human sexuality and gender identity? And how can a congregation understand the few texts that are often cited to condemn homosexuality and non-conforming gender identities?

### **3. Open and Affirming 101: Best Practices for Leading Your Church towards an ONA covenant**

Fear of conflict is often the reason churches hesitate to take their first steps towards an ONA commitment. But a carefully-planned ONA process can build consensus and rekindle a congregation's passion for the Gospel. Instead of dividing the congregation, a journey towards an ONA covenant can deepen relationships and open up new possibilities for evangelism, mission and ministry.

### **4. Open and Affirming 201: Best Practices for ONA Evangelism and Membership Growth**

An ONA covenant can help congregations grow in numbers and energy—but only if the church's commitment to LGBTQ inclusion is public and visible. This workshop shares the experience of growing ONA churches, with tips for marketing, advertising, communications and advocacy.

## ABOUT ANDY LANG



**Andy Lang, executive director of the Open and Affirming Coalition of the United Church of Christ, is available to lead workshops or one-day events in your church, Conference or Association!**

**A professional church communicator, Andy was a newspaper reporter and public relations specialist in Washington, D.C. In 1994, he founded the UCC's first national website at [www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org) and went on to lead the church's web and social media team. He has been the Open and Affirming Coalition's executive director since 2010.**

## EVENTS

*These events, which combine workshops with panels led by local church members, are suitable as regional ONA events sponsored by your Association or Conference and hosted by a centrally-located ONA congregation.*

### **Introduction to the Open and Affirming movement: first steps**

This one-day event includes workshops #1 and #2 above, plus a panel discussion with members of ONA congregations who tell their stories: how has joining an Open and Affirming church changed lives, and how has an ONA commitment transformed congregations and helped them grow? This event is suitable both for congregations considering first steps towards an ONA covenant, and churches who simply want to learn more about the ONA movement in the United Church of Christ.

### **What's Next for your Open and Affirming Church?**

This one-day event includes workshop #4 above, plus an opportunity for congregations to use the Coalition's "Self-Evaluation Tool for ONA Churches." A presentation by an informed representative of the transgender community is also recommended. Goal: to help churches revive their ONA commitment and learn new ways to translate their ONA covenant into action.

## TESTIMONIALS

**John Dorhauer**  
General Minister and President  
United Church of Christ

Your sermon and keynote at the Southwest Conference Annual meeting were simply stunning, Andy. I was deeply moved by your words. Your presence at inspired us all. Thank you for your leadership, your presence, and your wisdom on the journey!

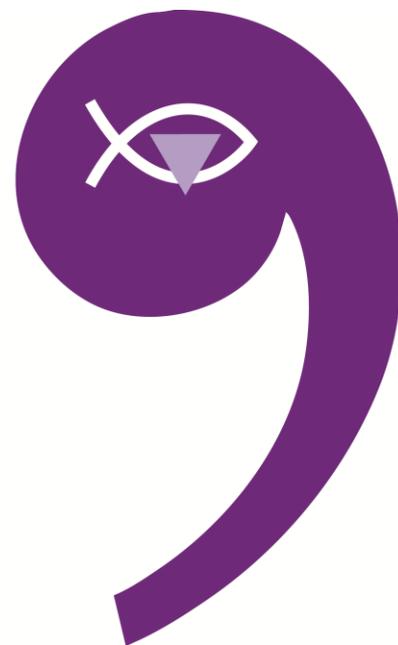
**Edith Guffey**  
Conference Minister  
Kansas-Oklahoma Conference  
United Church of Christ

Andy was excellent: warm, engaging, and willing to share his own journey illustrating that he could hear and relate to people who may be wrestling with questions and fears about the ONA process. He listened carefully and responded thoughtfully. Those who attended his workshop were better informed and encouraged about the possibility of entering into a dialogue in their churches. I was so impressed that we are now exploring how we can continue to work with Andy to increase the number of ONA churches in Kansas and Oklahoma. I have no reservations in recommending Andy as a speaker and workshop leader. I am confident he will do a great job.

**Freeman Palmer**  
Associate Conference Minister  
New York Conference  
United Church of Christ

Andy has led several Open and Affirming workshops in locations throughout the New York Conference. All who attended have given him high marks for his intelligence, insight and passion. Recently I heard Andy preach at one of our churches, and was moved by his sharing and his testimony. Whether your congregation is already Open and Affirming or taking your first steps towards an ONA Covenant, there is education, wisdom and blessing to be found when Andy Lang ministers in your midst either as preacher or workshop facilitator.

## CONTACT US



**OPEN AND AFFIRMING COALITION  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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