IS YOUR CHURCH 100% ONA?

100%
OPEN AND
AFFIRMING
IS YOUR CHURCH 100% ONA?

Your Open and Affirming covenant is the starting point, not the endpoint, of your relationship with the LGBTQ community.
IS YOUR CHURCH 100% ONA?

REALITY CHECK
RECLAIMING EVANGELISM

What do you think when you hear the word ‘evangelism?’
RECLAIMING EVANGELISM

What do you think when you hear the word ‘evangelism?’

- Spiritual coercion?
- Moral arrogance?
- Invasion of privacy?

OR

- Sharing Good News?
- Living with integrity and authenticity?
- Choosing to be ‘out’ spiritually?
Evangelism = Coming Out
BUT, ANDY, WON’T WE BECOME A ‘GAY CHURCH’?
REACHING MILLENNIALS

For most new ONA congregations, young heterosexual adults who identify with the values ONA represents are the growing edge (especially couples with children).
Most Millennials support marriage equality

- Evangelicals: 51%
- Republicans: 58%
- All Millennials: 72%

REACHING MILLENNIALS
One-third of millennials say they left churches because of homophobic practices and teachings.

(Source: Public Religion Research Institute, 2014)
REACHING MILLENNIALS

ONA churches 34% more members than non-ONA
Open and Affirming evangelism means being:

- Present
- Public
- Personal
MARKS OF ONA EVANGELISM

BE PRESENT
BE PRESENT: OPPORTUNITIES

▼ Visit the local LGBTQ community center:

1. Volunteer.
2. Offer financial support.
3. Ask about suicide prevention.
4. Ask about support groups for LGBTQ youth.
5. Ask about care for LGBTQ seniors.
6. Offer your church as a meeting place for LGBTQ community organizations: PFLAG, AA, other recovery groups.
BE PRESENT: OPPORTUNITIES

▼ Connect with LGBTQ student alliances and the ecumenical chaplaincy at local colleges and universities. Make sure they know you’re an Open and Affirming church.

▼ If you’re near a military base, LGBTQ service men and women should know there are churches where they are welcome.
USS New Mexico returns to home port: New London, Conn.

Source: United States Navy
The Bergeron family greet their father and husband.
Molly Malone, now 8 months, gets reacquainted after her dad’s 6-month absence.

Dana Jensen/The Day, New London, Conn.
A returning sailor, Jerrel, is surprised by Dylan’s marriage proposal.
This is the new normal!
(Where will this couple marry? Do LGBTQ military personnel in your community know about you?)
BE PRESENT: OPPORTUNITIES

- Transgender welcome
- Safe space for LGBTQ youth
- Care and advocacy for LGBTQ seniors
- Care and advocacy for LGBTQ asylum-seekers
BE PRESENT: TRANSGENDER

Many Open and Affirming churches don’t welcome transgender people in their covenant!

▼ Initiate a serious conversation about transgender issues. Begin a dialogue with your transgender neighbors. Use the “TransAction” study guide for churches.

▼ Publicize your welcome to the transgender community.

▼ Stand with your transgender neighbors when their rights or dignity are under attack.

▼ Observe Transgender Day of Visibility March 31 and Transgender Day of Remembrance Nov. 20.

▼ Resources: www.openandaffirming.org/transgender.
BE PRESENT: YOUTH

LGBTQ youth are still at risk—from bullying and suicide.

▼ Hold public and charter schools accountable to Federal policies protecting LGBTQ youth from bullying.

▼ With other welcoming churches, meet with your superintendent of schools.

▼ Ask a suicide-prevention expert to speak at your church.

▼ Advertise your church as a “safe space” for LGBTQ youth.

▼ Resources: www.openandaffirming.org/bullying.
BE PRESENT: SENIORS

LGBTQ seniors face abuse and neglect in nursing homes.

▶ Schedule a screening of “Generation Silent.” Make it a public event.

▶ With support from the LGBTQ community center, meet with LGBTQ seniors and learn about their needs.

▶ Organize a weekly social event and frequent outings for LGBTQ seniors.

▶ Work with other welcoming churches to demand appropriate care and safety from public and private institutions.

▶ Resources: www.openandaffirming.org/seniors.
LGBTQ refugees are fleeing from countries where the penalty for “coming out of the closet” is prison, or worse.

- In at least 75 countries, same-sex relationships and gender non-conformity are punishable by long prison terms, often an incitement to mob violence.
- But LGBTQ asylum-seekers usually find no support in immigrant communities from their own country.
- You can partner with other churches and local organizations to adopt and shelter refugees.
- Resources: www.openandaffirming.org/international.
Evangelism = Advocacy
We’ve won marriage equality, so there’s nothing left to advocate for, right?
BE PRESENT: ADVOCACY

Mike Pence
Vice-President

Tom Price
HHS Secretary

Jeff Sessions
Attorney-General

Ben Carson
HUD Secretary
LGBTQ civil rights are vulnerable: most existing protections are the result of executive orders and actions during the Obama Administration.

And although Trump has promised to keep discrimination protections for federal workers and contractors, and describes marriage equality as “settled law,” his appointments and other decisions have already undermined LGBTQ rights.
BE PRESENT: ADVOCACY

▼ Ben Carson, who has compared same-sex love to bestiality, oversees protections against job and housing discrimination as Secretary for Housing and Urban Development.

▼ Tom Price, a dedicated foe of LGBTQ civil rights in the U.S. House of Representatives, oversees rules that guarantee equal health care access for LGBTQ Americans as Secretary for Health and Human Services.

▼ Jeff Sessions, the new Attorney General, has already acted against federal rules that provide bathroom access for transgender students.
The President will fill 103 vacancies in the Federal courts, potentially tipping the balance in the Federal judiciary which until now has been a bulwark for LGBTQ civil rights.

Proposals restricting immigration and refugees will also affect LGBTQ asylum-seekers.

The “First Amendment Defense Act,” which President Trump has promised to sign, and “Religious Freedom” laws proposed in many states, would legalize discrimination by public officials, business owners, employers and health-care providers.
BE PRESENT: STATE LAWS

[Map of the United States with states color-coded:
- LGB+T protection (20)
- LGB only (2)
- No protection (28)
- LGBT protection banned by state law (3) ]

Source: Movement Advancement Project
BE PRESENT: IN A CRISIS

Presence also means your church is prepared when there’s a crisis!
MARKS OF ONA EVANGELISM

BE PUBLIC
Be visible!
**BE PUBLIC**

- Show up at the annual Pride Parade and carry a big sign.
- Observe Pride Sunday with a renewal of your Open and Affirming covenant, and publicize the event in newspapers, community bulletin boards, LGBTQ media.
- Design an eye-catching brochure that proclaims your welcome. Use the rainbow comma or another rainbow image on the front panel. Share with visitors and distribute it at LGBTQ events. Keep in stock at the LGBTQ community center, public libraries, coffee shops, college campuses.
- Post a rainbow comma on your homepage: where everyone can see it!
BE PUBLIC

Display a big rainbow comma on your church sign.
Display a rainbow flag or banner at the entrance of your church.
BE PUBLIC
BE PUBLIC
openandaffirming.org/ona/next/rainbow-signs
Weddings, Weddings!!!
Many LGBTQ couples aren’t just looking for a pretty church for a wedding: they’re also returning to church after an absence of years. Will you be their new church home?
Lesbian and gay couples won’t know your church welcomes same-sex weddings if you don’t publicize:

- on your website and Facebook page.
- in local newspapers and news websites.
- in local LGBTQ media.
- in the LGBTQ community center (brochures).
MARKS OF ONA EVANGELISM

BE PERSONAL
You have a story to tell!
BE PERSONAL: EVANGELISM

▼ Teachable moments:
  1. When you hear a homophobic remark.
  2. When a conversation affords opportunity for witness.

▼ Purpose: not to persuade someone to change their opinion or their feelings, but simply to be authentic and honest in the situation.

▼ Remember: personal evangelism is not coercive, confrontational or aggressive. It is respectful, open and patient. Evangelism means “coming out”—nothing more, and nothing less.
BE PERSONAL: EVANGELISM

▼ Wear a **rainbow comma pin**! It’s a great conversation-starter!

▼ Carry a **business card** wherever you go with your church’s street address, website, Facebook page, phone number, service schedule—and a **rainbow comma**!
OTHER RESOURCES

-The Coalition website, email newsletter, Facebook page
-UCC Office for Health and Wholeness Advocacy
-Stillspeaking 2.0 Social Media Toolkit
-Institute for Welcoming Resources

openandaffirming.org/evangelism
openandaffirming.org/subscribe
facebook.com/ucc.coalition
ucc.org/lgbt
ucc.org/stillspeaking_toolkit
welcomingresources.org
OTHER RESOURCES

YOU, AND OTHER MEMBERS OF YOUR CONGREGATION!
OTHER RESOURCES

100% OPEN AND AFFIRMING
THE ROAD AHEAD

June 27-29
Baltimore, MD
www.openandaffirming.org/ona-gathering