



OPEN AND AFFIRMING
COALITION
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

ONA 201: EVANGELISM
WEBINAR FOR OPEN AND AFFIRMING CHURCHES

ANDY LANG

ONA 201: EVANGELISM



openandaffirming.org/evangelism

openandaffirming.org/subscribe

ed@openandaffirming.org

IS YOUR CHURCH 100% ONA?



100%

**OPEN AND
AFFIRMING**

IS YOUR CHURCH 100% ONA?



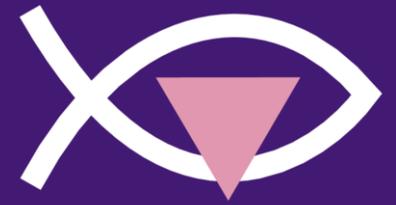
Your Open and Affirming
covenant is the starting
point, not the endpoint, of
your relationship with the
LGBTQ community.

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?

RECLAIMING EVANGELISM



Evangelism = Coming Out

REACHING MILLENNIALS



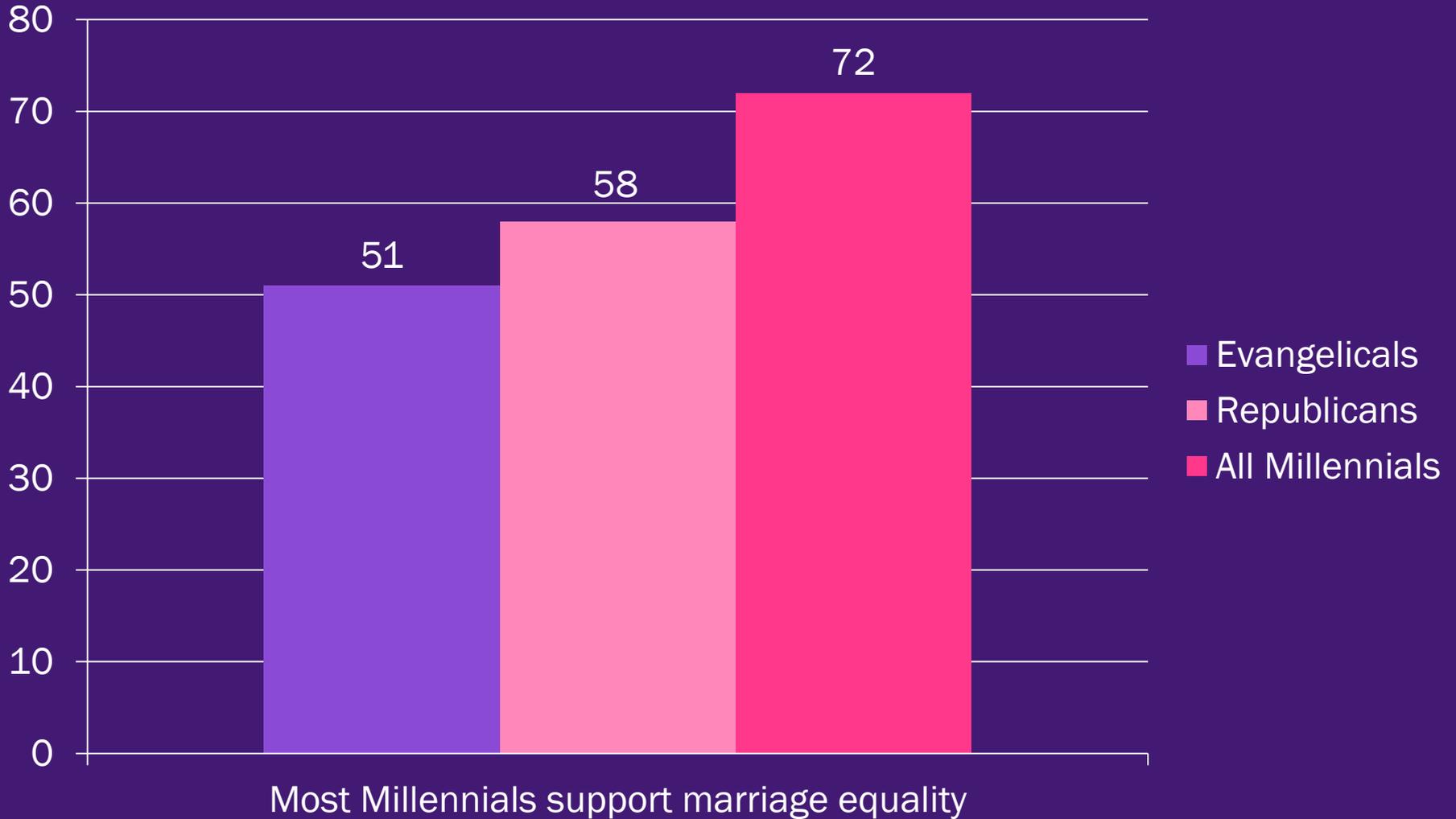
BUT, ANDY, WON'T WE
BECOME A 'GAY CHURCH'?

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).

REACHING MILLENNIALS



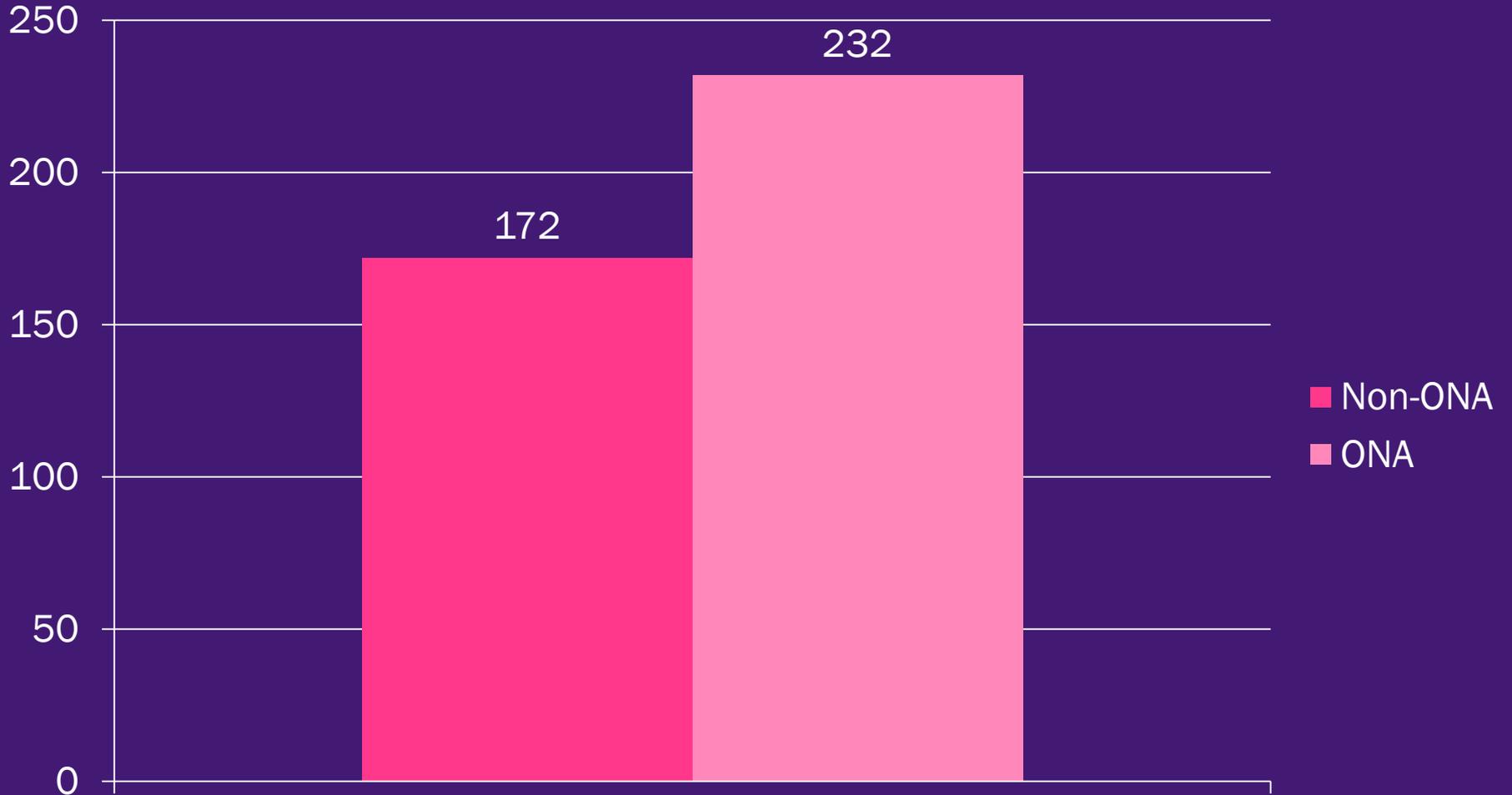
REACHING MILLENNIALS



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

MARKS OF ONA EVANGELISM



Open and Affirming evangelism means being:

- ▼ Present
- ▼ Public
- ▼ Personal

MARKS OF ONA EVANGELISM



BE PRESENT

BE PRESENT: OPPORTUNITIES



▼ Visit the local LGBTQ community center:

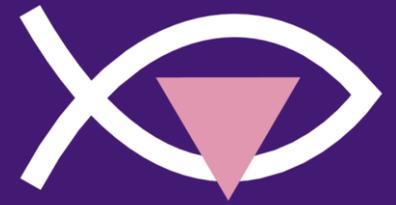
1. Volunteer.
2. Offer financial support.
3. Ask about suicide prevention.
4. Ask about support groups for LGBTQ youth.
5. Ask about care for LGBTQ seniors.
6. Offer your church as a meeting place for LGBTQ community organizations: PFLAG, AA, other recovery groups.

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.

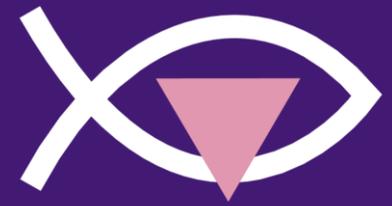
BE PRESENT: OPPORTUNITIES



USS New Mexico returns to home port: New London, Conn.

Source: United States Navy

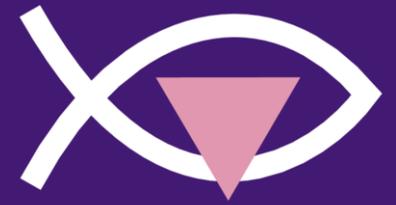
BE PRESENT: OPPORTUNITIES



The Bergeron family greet their father and husband.

Dana Jensen/The Day, New London, Conn.

BE PRESENT: OPPORTUNITIES



Molly Malone, now 8 months, gets reacquainted after her dad's 6-month absence.

Dana Jensen/The Day, New London, Conn.

BE PRESENT: OPPORTUNITIES



A returning sailor, Jerrel, is surprised by Dylan's marriage proposal.

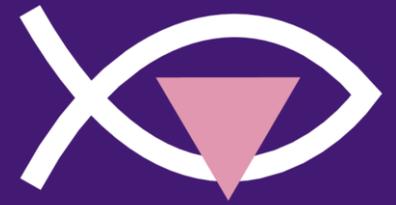
Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Kristina Young /U.S. Navy Photo

BE PRESENT: OPPORTUNITIES



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.

BE PRESENT: ASYLUM-SEEKERS



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.

BE PRESENT: ADVOCACY



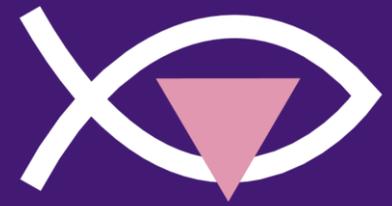
Evangelism = Advocacy

BE PRESENT: 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

BE PRESENT: ADVOCACY



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

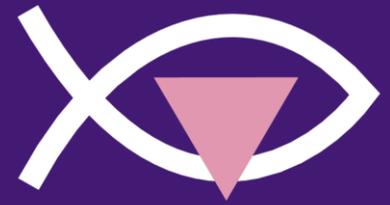
And although Trump has promised to keep discrimination protections for federal workers and contractors, and describes marriage equality as “settled law,” his appointments and other decisions have already undermined LGBTQ rights.

BE PRESENT: ADVOCACY



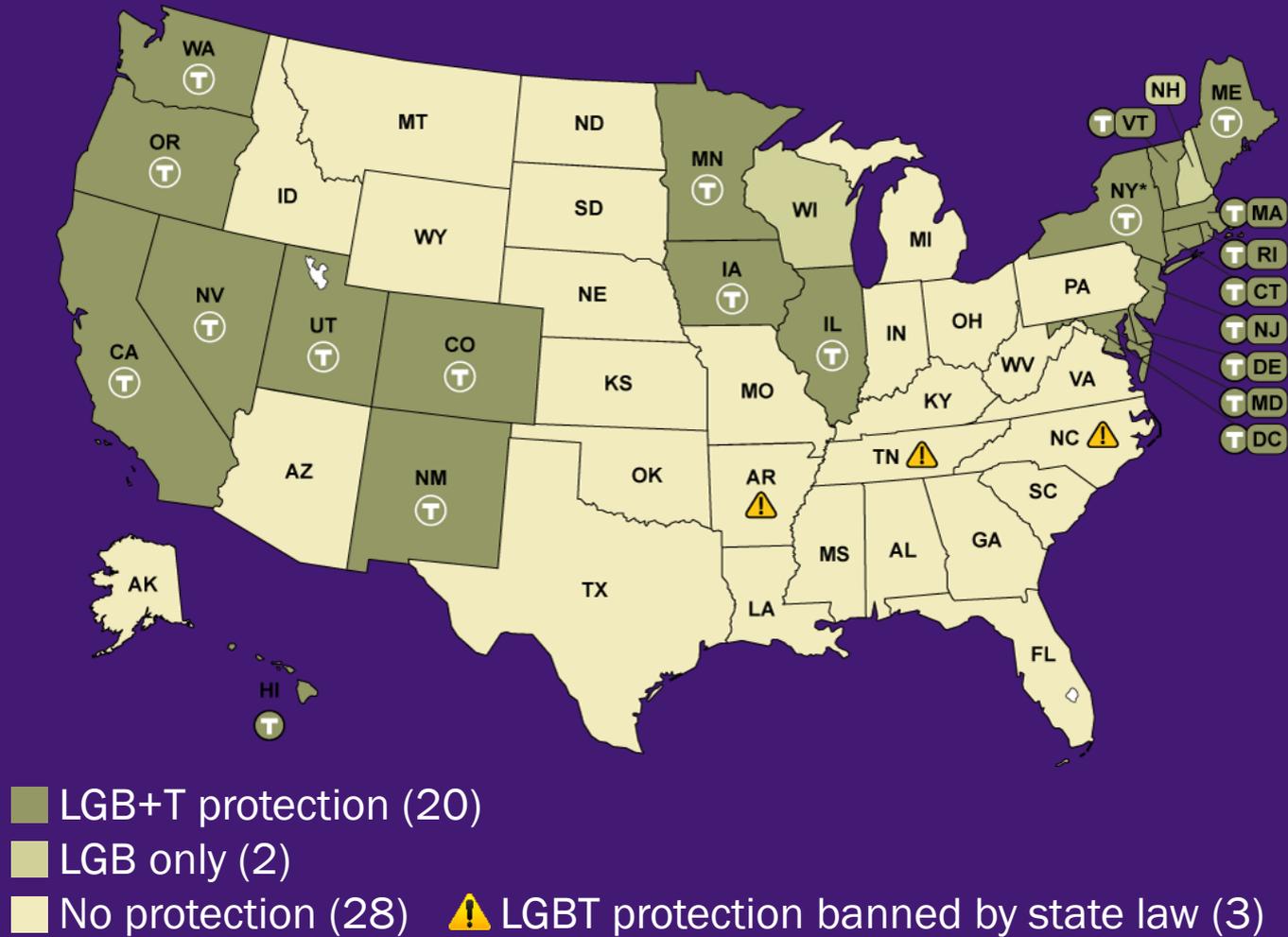
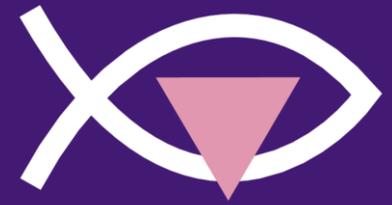
- ▼ Ben Carson, who has compared same-sex love to bestiality, oversees protections against job and housing discrimination as Secretary for Housing and Urban Development.
- ▼ Tom Price, a dedicated foe of LGBTQ civil rights in the U.S. House of Representatives, oversees rules that guarantee equal health 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.

BE PRESENT: ADVOCACY



- ▼ 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



BE PRESENT: IN A CRISIS



Presence also means your
church is prepared when
there's a crisis!

MARKS OF ONA EVANGELISM



BE PUBLIC

BE PUBLIC



Be visible!

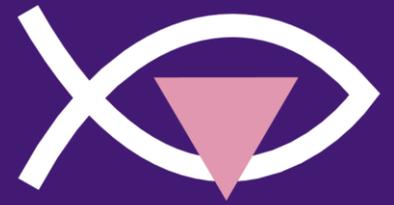


BE PUBLIC



- ▼ 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 home page: 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



BE PUBLIC



openandaffirming.org/ona/next/rainbow-signs

BE PUBLIC



Weddings, Weddings!!!



BE PUBLIC



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?

BE PUBLIC



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

BE PERSONAL: EVANGELISM



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



June 27-29

Baltimore, MD

www.openandaffirming.org/ona-gathering