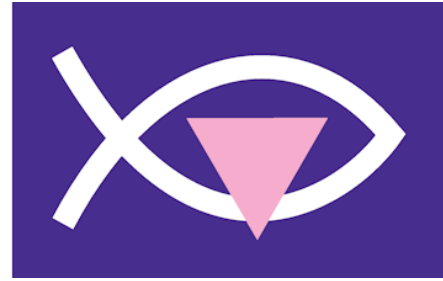


# OPEN AND AFFIRMING COALITION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



## Coalition priorities 2020-2023

*Please note: these priorities along with the Coalition's budget are subject to annual review by the Coalition's Leadership Team. They take into account the Coalition's staff capacity.*

The Open and Affirming Coalition is an independent non-profit organization in covenantal relationship with the UCC's national staff and other recognized groups in the church. The Coalition:

### **I. Supports non-ONA congregations through the ONA process.**

At present, nearly 1,600 congregations (about 31% of all churches in the UCC) are Open and Affirming. We are the largest LGBTQ-affirming church movement in the world, and growing at a rate of one to two new ONA churches per week. But two-thirds of UCC congregations are still unable to offer a confident and well-informed welcome to their LGBTQ members and neighbors. The Coalition is committed to grow the ONA movement until the UCC is "100% ONA." To reach this goal, the Coalition:

- Effectively advocates for the ONA option to non-ONA churches, including marketing campaigns and the publication of research on the comparative health and vitality of congregations that adopt ONA covenants. Communications and marketing are key elements of this strategy.
- Supports churches as they develop and implement their ONA process, including the "Building an Inclusive Church" toolkit and other resources (website, social media, webinars, workshops, other training programs) based on the principle of "Graceful Engagement." (See article at [openandaffirming.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Graceful-Engagement.pdf](https://openandaffirming.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Graceful-Engagement.pdf).)
- Commits to cross-cultural competence, including the capacity to reach racial/ethnic churches and comparatively conservative congregations of any racial/ethnic identity that are not yet ONA. Cross-cultural competence requires that the Coalition's leadership is ethnically, racially and theologically diverse, and represents the widest possible diversity of queer communities.

### **2. Supports existing ONA churches with resources, webinars and training programs in advocacy, marketing, communications and best practices for church growth, and publicizes innovative ministries of effective ONA congregations.**

**3. Commits to promoting transgender/non-binary inclusion and justice, both to congregations engaged in an ONA process and to existing ONA churches that are not fully trans-inclusive.**

**4. Commits to intersectional justice by building intentional relationships with other oppressed communities—including, but not limited to, communities of color. To reach this goal, the Coalition:**

- Continually reminds ONA churches that their ONA covenants require a commitment to intersectional justice.
- Makes its extensive and growing community on social media, its email newsletter “RIPPLES” and its webinar program available to other recognized movements in the UCC that are working towards racial, economic and environmental justice, and actively promotes resources and training programs sponsored by national ministries in the UCC, including “Sacred Conversations on Race” and the “White Privilege Curriculum.”
- Collaborates with Ministers for Racial, Social and Economic Justice, the Fellowship of Affirming Ministries, the Colectivo de UCC Latinx Ministries, UCC Disabilities Ministries, UCC Mental Health Network, Council for American Indian Ministries and others, seriously pursues intentional relationships with these groups based on mutual covenants, and promotes other certification programs designed to expand the commitment of ONA churches to inclusion and justice, for example, the “Accessible 2 All” and “WISE” programs.

**5. Collaborates with other denominational LGBTQ-affirming programs through the National LGBTQ Task Force.**

**6. Because the Coalition receives no regular support from Our Church’s Wider Mission, fundraising campaigns and other financial development strategies are a prerequisite for its ambitious and labor-intensive agenda. Fundraising is a key commitment for the Coalition’s staff and Leadership Team. The Coalition’s goal for the coming four years includes (1) expanding its current annual budget from \$180,000 to \$250,000, (2) building its reserve investment fund for emergencies, and (3) increasing giving by ONA churches from 5% to 35%.**