



Open and Affirming **WEBINARS**

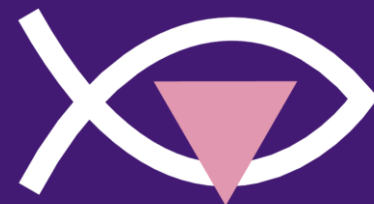
ONA *Next*

BEST PRACTICES FROM THRIVING ONA CHURCHES

OPEN AND AFFIRMING
COALITION
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



ONA NEXT: EVANGELISM



openandaffirming.org/evangelism

openandaffirming.org/subscribe

uccresources.com/collections/lgbtq

office@openandaffirming.org

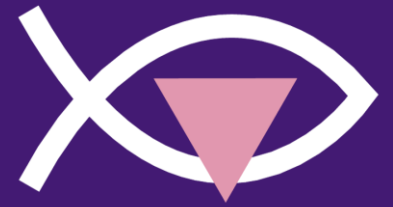
IS YOUR CHURCH 100% ONA?



100%

**OPEN AND
AFFIRMING**

IS YOUR CHURCH 100% ONA?



WONKA
GOLDEN TICKET

DATE
FEB. 1

TIME
10 A.M. (SHARP)

PLACE
FRONT GATES

THIS GOLDEN TICKET ENSURES ADMITTANCE

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

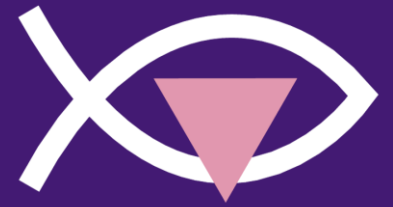
RECLAIMING EVANGELISM



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



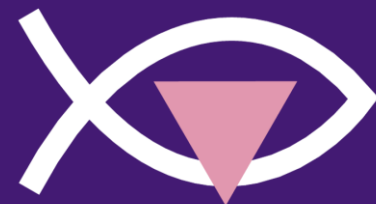
BUT, ANDY, WON'T WE BECOME A
'GAY CHURCH'?

REACHING MILLENNIALS



For many new ONA congregations, young heterosexual adults who identify with the values ONA represents are the growing edge (especially couples with children).

REACHING MILLENNIALS



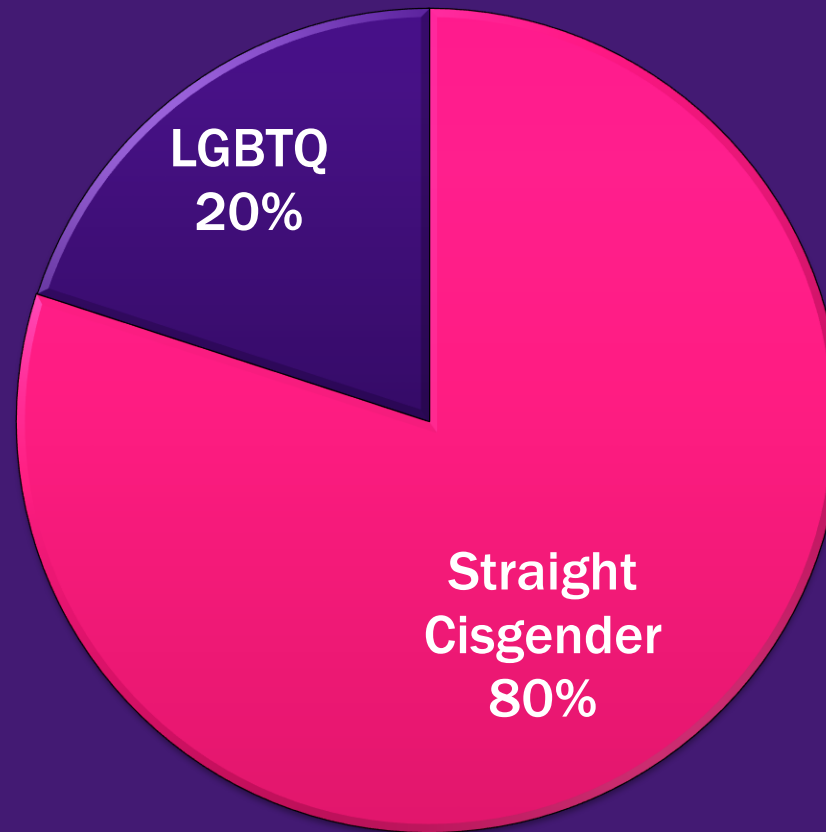
One-third of millennials say they have left churches because of homophobic or transphobic practices and teachings.

(Source: Public Religion Research Institute, 2014)

REACHING MILLENNIALS

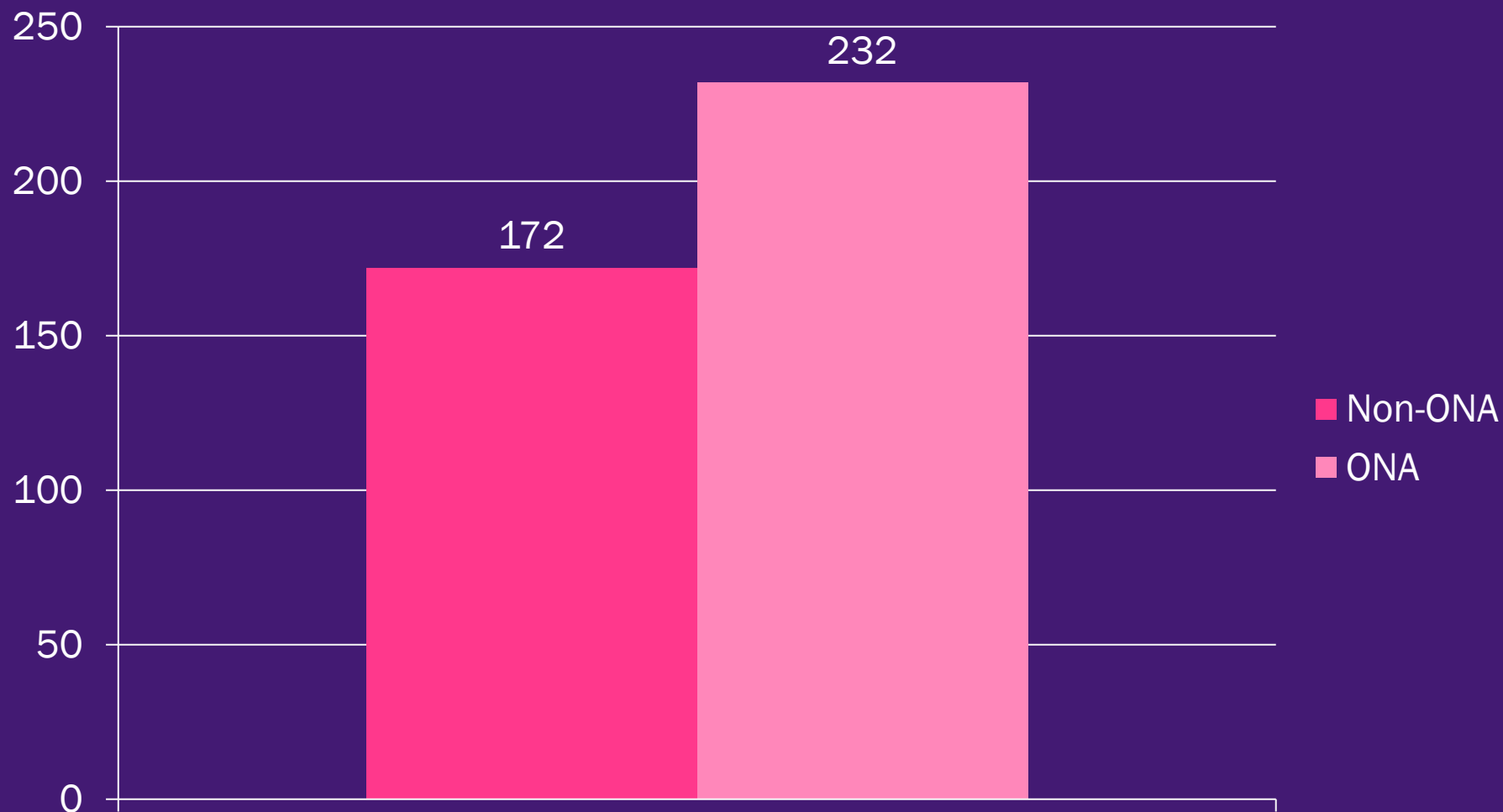


Of 76 million millennials, 15.2 million identify as LGBTQ



(Source: GLAAD, 2017)

REACHING MILLENNIALS



ONA churches 34% more members than non-ONA

MARKS OF ONA EVANGELISM



Three marks of ONA evangelism:

Be present.

Be public.

Be 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 or installation, LGBTQ service members should know there are churches where they are welcome.

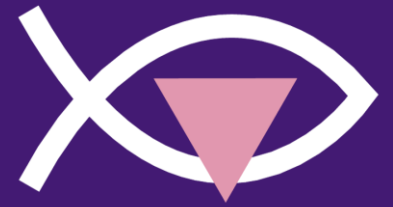
BE PRESENT: OPPORTUNITIES



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

Source: United States Navy

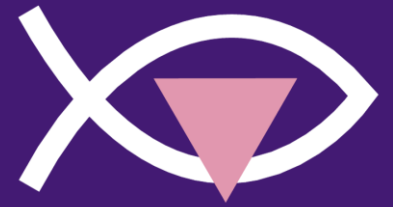
BE PRESENT: OPPORTUNITIES



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

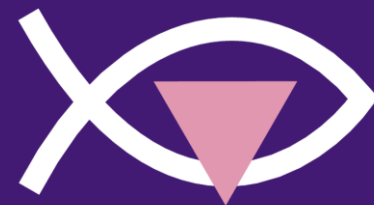
BE PRESENT: OPPORTUNITIES



This is the new normal!

Where will this couple marry? Do LGBTQ military personnel in your community know about you?

BE PRESENT: OPPORTUNITIES



- ▼ Transgender/non-binary welcome
- ▼ Safe space for LGBTQ youth
- ▼ Care and advocacy for LGBTQ seniors
- ▼ Care and advocacy for LGBTQ asylum-seekers

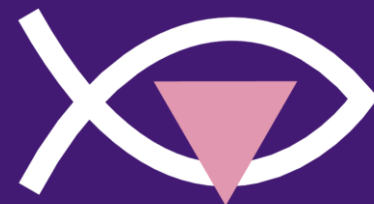
BE PRESENT: TRANSGENDER



Sixty percent of ONA churches say they can't offer "a confident and well-informed welcome" to their transgender and non-binary neighbors!

- ▼ Initiate a serious conversation about gender identity. Begin a dialogue with your transgender and non-binary neighbors. Use the "TransAction" study guide for churches.
- ▼ Publicize your welcome to the transgender community.
- ▼ Initiate re-naming ceremonies with baptism or renewal of baptismal vows.
- ▼ Observe Transgender Day of Visibility March 31 and Transgender Day of Remembrance Nov. 20.

BE PRESENT: TRANSGENDER

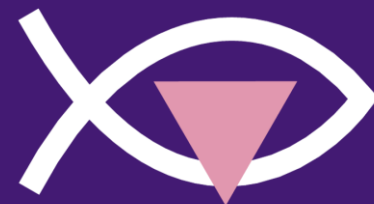


- ▼ Provide gender-neutral bathrooms in your church, with suitable education if needed.



- ▼ Stand with your transgender and non-binary neighbors when state laws attack their rights or human dignity.
- ▼ Resources: www.openandaffirming.org/transgender

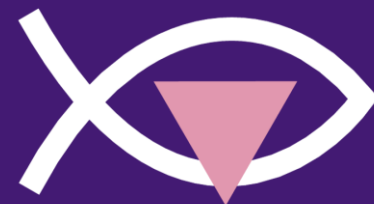
BE PRESENT: YOUTH



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.

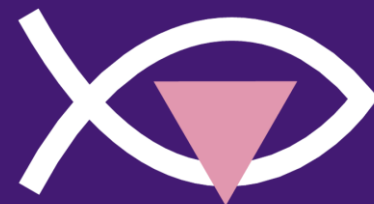
BE PRESENT: SENIORS



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.

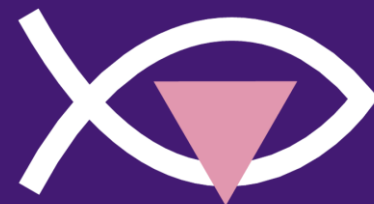
- ▼ In at least 75 countries, same-sex relationships and gender non-conformity are punishable by long prison terms, often an incitement to mob violence.
- ▼ But LGBTQ asylum-seekers usually find no support in immigrant communities from their own country.
- ▼ You can partner with other churches and local organizations to adopt and shelter refugees.
- ▼ Resources: www.openandaffirming.org/international.

BE PRESENT: ADVOCACY



Evangelism = Advocacy

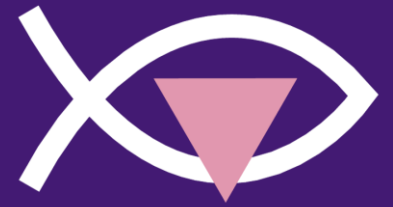
BE PRESENT: ADVOCACY



Executive orders can be overturned by the next President or nullified by the Supreme Court. The safest way to protect LGBTQ rights is to enact legislation.

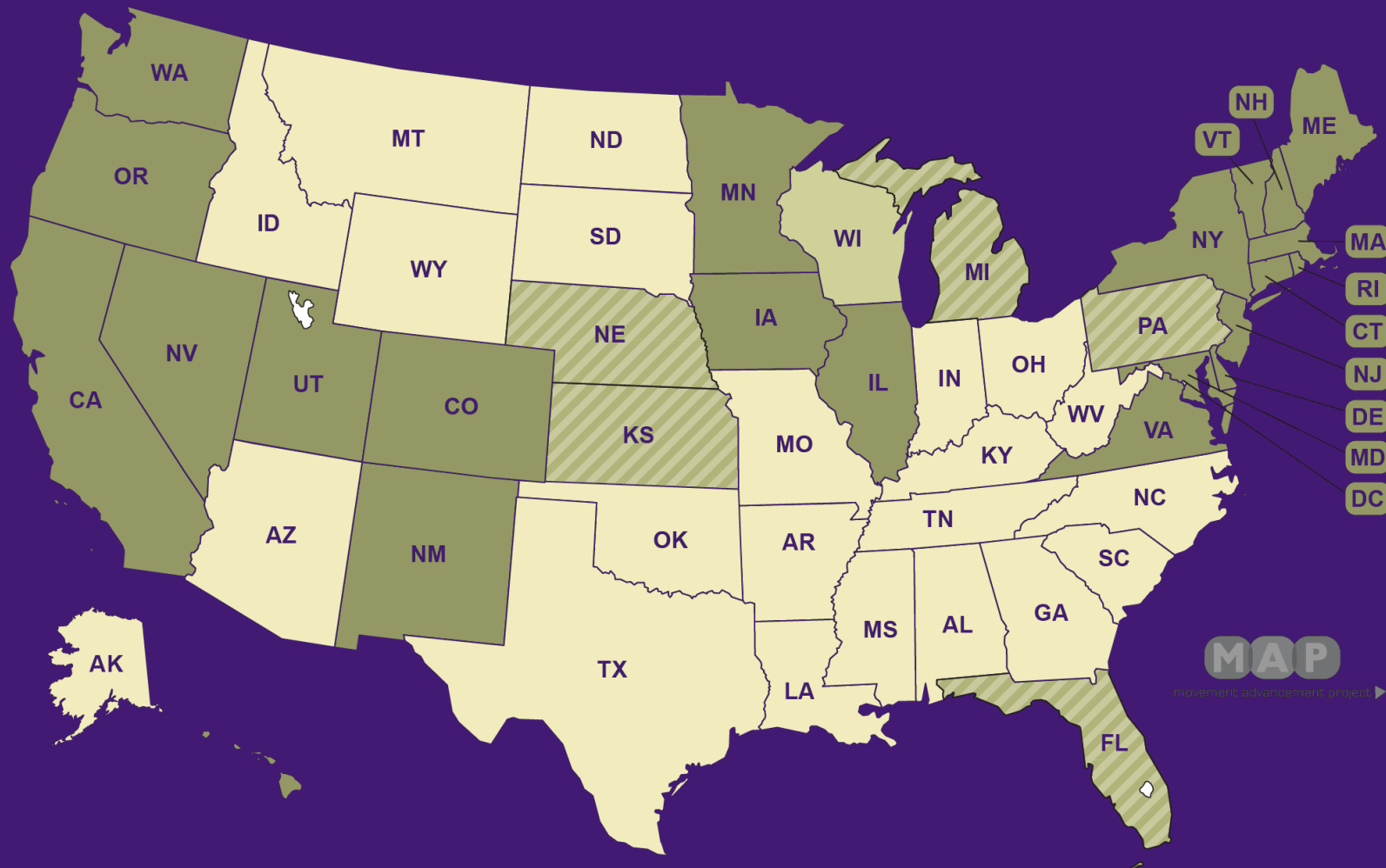
- ▼ Support: Respect for Marriage Act.
- ▼ Support: State laws protecting LGBTQ residents from discrimination in housing and public accommodations.
- ▼ Support: a ban on “conversion therapy,” a practice legal in most states based on the premise that homosexuality and non-conforming gender identity are mental illnesses.

BE PRESENT: ADVOCACY



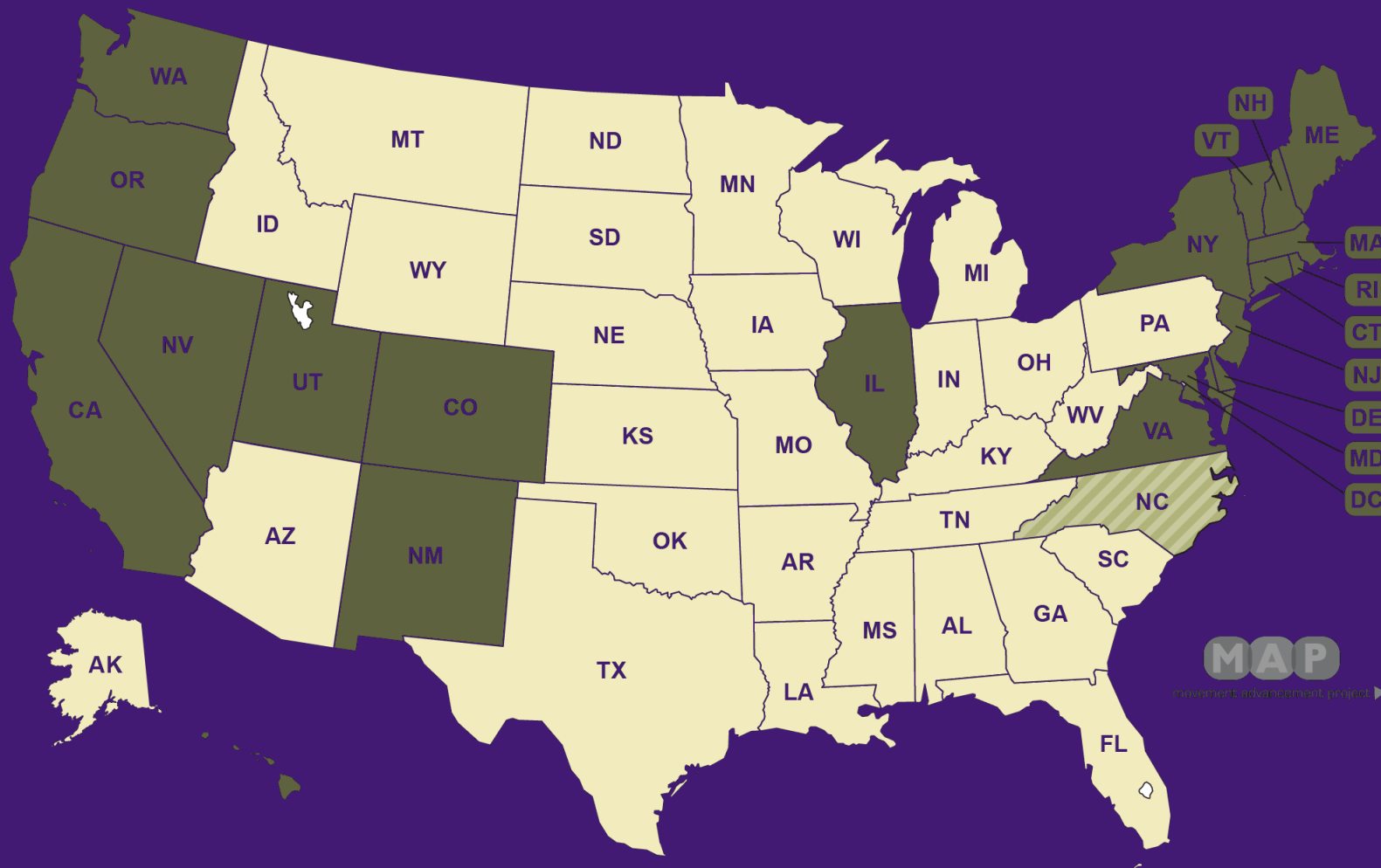
- ▼ Oppose: laws defining “religious freedom” so broadly that any restaurant could deny service to LGBTQ customers, or health-care workers could refuse to treat LGBTQ patients, or owners of rental properties could turn away LGBTQ tenants.
- ▼ Oppose: state laws that deny parents the right to make medical decisions for their trans children.

HOUSING DISCRIMINATION



Source: Movement Advancement Project

CONVERSION THERAPY



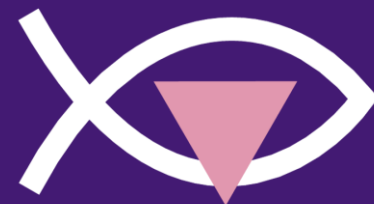
Source: Movement Advancement Project

BE PRESENT: ADVOCACY



- ▼ www.hrc.org
- ▼ www.thetaskforce.org
- ▼ www.transequality.org
- ▼ www.openandaffirming.org/resources/issues/links

BE PRESENT: IN A CRISIS



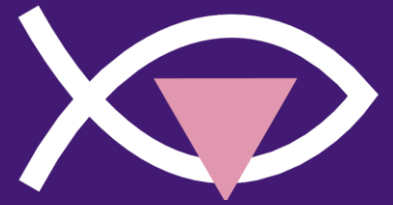
Presence also means your church
is prepared when there's a crisis!

MARKS OF ONA EVANGELISM



BE PUBLIC

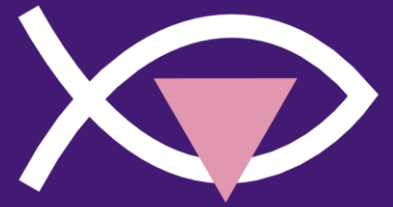
BE PUBLIC



Be visible!

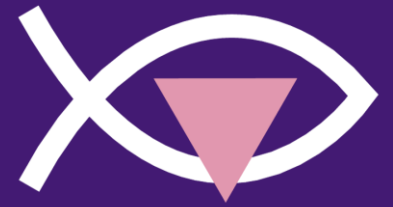


BE PUBLIC



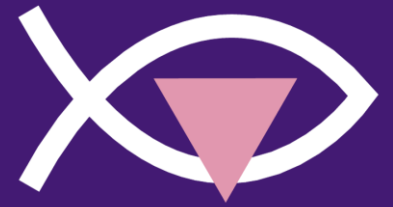
- ▼ Show up at the annual Pride Parade and carry a big sign!
- ▼ Celebrate National ONA Sunday (Fourth Sunday of June) with a renewal of your Open and Affirming covenant, and publicize the event in newspapers, community bulletin boards, LGBTQ media.
- ▼ Design an eye-catching brochure or flyer that proclaims your welcome. Use a rainbow comma or another rainbow image on the front panel. Share with visitors and distribute at LGBTQ events. Keep in stock at the LGBTQ community center, public libraries, coffee shops, college campuses.

BE PUBLIC



- ▼ Post a rainbow comma on your website's home page—where everyone can see it!
- ▼ Display a big rainbow comma on your church sign.
- ▼ Display a rainbow flag or banner at the entrance of your church.

BE PUBLIC

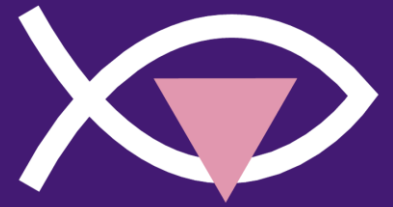


BE PUBLIC



openandaffirming.org/ona/next/rainbow-signs

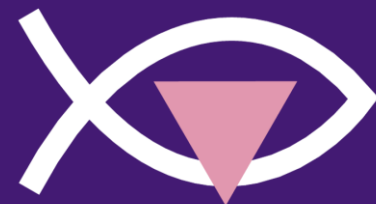
BE PUBLIC



Weddings, Weddings!!!



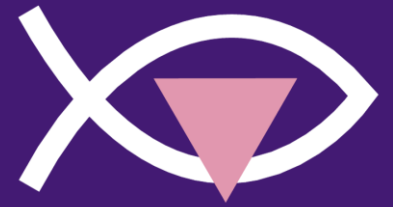
BE PUBLIC



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



But lesbian and gay couples won't know your church welcomes same-sex weddings if you don't publicize:

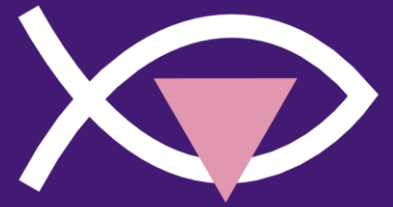
- ▼ on your website and Facebook page.
- ▼ in local newspapers and news websites.
- ▼ in local LGBTQ media.
- ▼ in the LGBTQ community center (your brochure or flyer).

MARKS OF ONA EVANGELISM



BE PERSONAL

BE PERSONAL: TELL YOUR STORY



You have a story to tell!

BE PERSONAL: TELL YOUR STORY



▼ Teachable moments:

1. When you hear a homophobic or transphobic 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. ONA evangelism means “coming out”—nothing more, and nothing less.

BE PERSONAL: TELL YOUR STORY



- ▼ 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



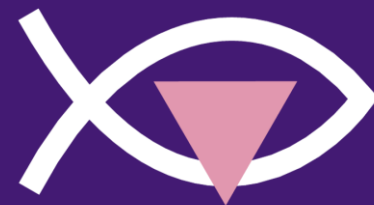
YOU, AND OTHER MEMBERS
OF YOUR CONGREGATION!

ONA NEXT



COVENANT RENEWAL

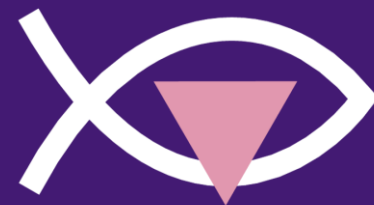
ONA NEXT: COVENANT RENEWAL



An ONA church should periodically review its ONA commitments.

- ▼ Are you living according to your covenant's "vows?"
- ▼ Can you confidently welcome and support transgender/nonbinary seekers?
- ▼ Are you growing into your commitments to welcome and advocate with other communities (race, ability, etc.)?

ONA NEXT: COVENANT RENEWAL



Your ONA anniversary (5, 10, 20, 25, 30 years), or any other time, is an opportunity to explore new opportunities for ministry and mission in your community. This resource will help you review and expand your ONA vows:

openandaffirming.org/self-evaluation-tool-for-ona-churches

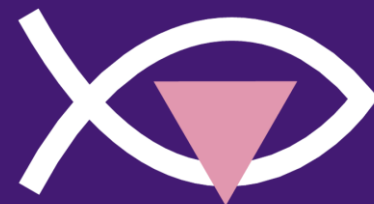
ONA NEXT: COVENANT RENEWAL



When your church discerns how to renew your ONA covenant, and live into the vows you made, the UCC's "Just World Covenants" can help:

- ▼ Sacred Conversations on Race
- ▼ WISE Congregations for Mental Health
- ▼ A2A Covenants
- ▼ Creation Justice Churches
- ▼ Just Peace Churches
- ▼ Our Whole Lives Sexuality Curriculum
- ▼ Learn more at ucc.org/just_world_covenants.

OTHER RESOURCES



openandaffirming.org/evangelism

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