

2009: ONA Resolution

(As approved by SWC Annual Meeting, April 25, 2009)

WHEREAS Jesus Christ teaches us to love one another (John 15:7), and;

WHEREAS the Apostle Paul teaches us to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:14), and;

WHEREAS the members of the Southwest Conference of the United Church of Christ covenant and struggle to be a Body of Christ “in which there is no dissension, but where members may have the same care for one another, so that if one member suffers, all suffer together with it, and if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.” (1 Corinthians 12:26-27), therefore;

BE IT RESOLVED that we, the members of the Southwest Conference of the United Church of Christ, in all aspects of its administrative, program and worship life, declare the Southwest Conference to be Open and Affirming (ONA) of all persons, specifically including those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender. We covenant with God and one another to extend welcome and Christian fellowship to all followers and seekers of Christ without fear, prejudice, or discrimination in regard to sexual orientation, gender identity, race, age, ethnicity, nationality, physical, mental or emotional condition, education, financial situation, biblical or theological interpretation, or any other circumstance that has historically been a barrier to full life, participation, membership, mission, work and ministry in the Southwest Conference of the United Church of Christ. We embrace all persons as equal partners in the Body of Christ with unlimited access to opportunity of service to God, and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we of the Southwest Conference of the United Church of Christ will continue a committed, prayerful, and respectful dialogue with one another as we seek God’s guidance for greater biblical and theological understanding of important issues, including those relating to human sexuality, and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Southwest Conference of the United Church of Christ, recognizing that each congregation within the Conference can make its own decision in its own time, encourages its member churches to study and be in conversation about human sexuality, the sacredness of all relationships, the gifts of different gender identities, and other related issues, and in light of that study, in covenant with God and one another, prayerfully consider adopting an Open and Affirming statement and full inclusion similar to that of the Conference, and finally;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Southwest Conference of the United Church of Christ reaches this decision because we “affirm the responsibility of the Church in each generation to make this faith its own in reality of worship, in honesty of thought and expression, and in purity of heart before God.” (from Paragraph 2, Preamble, UCC Constitution.)

Implementation:

The Southwest Conference of the United Church of Christ, in its effort to assist any congregation within the Southwest Conference wishing to embark upon an Open and Affirming study, recommends the following sources of information and resources for ONA Process design:

The UCC Coalition: www.UCCCoalition.org

Pacific School of Religion, Center for Gay and Lesbian Studies: www.elgs.org

The Interchurch Resource Center: www.icresource.org

SWC Staff consultation: office@uccswc.com or 602-468-3830

All ONA churches of the SWC: www.southwestucc.org