



The First Unitarian Church of Hamilton

A Liberal Spiritual Community Since 1889

Welcoming Congregation



Unitarians at Hamilton Pride 2018, including, in red, Monica Bennett who facilitates the congregation's sexual and gender justice efforts and Melanie Parish, right, who facilitates PFLAG meetings held at the church.

Each of us has worth and dignity, and that worth includes our gender and our sexuality. As Unitarian Universalists (UUs), we not only open our doors to people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, we value diversity of sexuality and gender and see it as a spiritual gift. We create inclusive religious communities and work for Two-Spirit LGBTQAI+ justice and equity as a core part of who we are. All of who you are is sacred. All of who you are is welcome.

The Welcoming Congregation Team is committed to supporting Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ congregants and community members through education, social engagements, and

community partnerships.

Contact: welcoming@uuhamilton.ca

Letter of Public Witness to Redeemer University

December 15, 2022

Dear Redeemer University,

News of the tragic death by suicide of beloved queer sibling Bekett Noble at Redeemer University on November 23, 2022 calls us to speak out in love and with holy rage.

As Unitarian Universalists we believe in the inherent worth and dignity of every person, and that all human beings are beautiful, whole, holy, and worthy of love. We believe that our lives are interconnected and that we are here to build a world of justice and inclusion for all people, a world where every person is beloved.

Bekett was an activist and advocate who sought to transform Redeemer University into a place where queer students can learn and grow in an environment that honours, respects, and values their humanity. As details surrounding Bekett's death emerge, it is clear Bekett died because of the cruel and dehumanizing culture at Redeemer University. Bekett's many attempts to alert faculty, staff, and University leaders to the culture of hate and violence harming students were dismissed and ignored.

Unitarian Universalists have long celebrated the full inclusion and affirmation of Two Spirit LGBTQAI+ persons in our faith and in our world. In 1979 we ordained an openly gay minister, and in 1988 ordained a transgender minister for the first time. We have provided education to our congregations on dismantling bias and creating communities of welcome for Two Spirit LGBTQAI+ people since 1989. We know that our work is not done and we continue to learn, grow, and openly engage feedback and accountability. We must also move our values into the world and advocate powerfully for change.

As people of faith, we call Redeemer University into accountability for the culture of cruelty that led to Bekett's death. We encourage Redeemer to confront its institutional and systemic violence and aggression that targets, demeans, and dehumanizes all queer people who learn and work within its walls. Redeemer University cannot continue to hide behind a wall of silence, a silence that erases the human rights of Two Spirit LGBTQAI+ people at the University and in the world. Redeemer University must continue to listen to Bekett Noble and implement the recommendations they encouraged the university to adopt.

We will continue to proclaim the good news of a love that knows no bounds and welcome all who are seeking a place to be fully themselves to our faith community of love, hope, and justice.

Signed,

Barb Wallace, President, The First Unitarian Church of Hamilton

Rev. Jamie Elaine Boyce, Interim Minister, The First Unitarian Church of Hamilton

Upcoming Events

The Welcoming Congregation Team is planning a virtual winter get-together for Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ congregants. Stay posted for details!

Past and Continuing Actions

Welcoming Congregation Designation

Since 1998, First UU Hamilton has been certified as a [Welcoming Congregation](#). We aim to be actively welcoming and inclusive of individuals with marginalized sexual orientation and gender identities.

PFLAG Hamilton-Wentworth

In pre-pandemic times, our church has hosted the monthly meetings of PFLAG Canada, Hamilton-Wentworth, a support group for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer adults and youth, since PFLAG formed in late 2016. We hope to continue hosting PFLAG in safer times.

An Evening with Ivan Coyote – 2019

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A sold out crowd of over 300 people at the Westdale Theatre showed their appreciation for Ivan Coyote in the form of applause, laughter, tears, and quiet listening. And then there was more laughter. And more applause. Those in attendance had their hearts and minds opened a little wider. Wide enough to generously give over \$900 to PFLAG. This event was made possible by the collaborative efforts of the First Unitarian Church of Hamilton, PFLAG, McMaster Gender Studies & Feminist Research Program, and the volunteers who ushered, staffed the book signing table and generally helped to make the evening the fun and successful night that it was. Thank you to all!

Gender Neutral Washrooms – 2018

In 2018, we installed new gender-neutral washroom signs developed with congregational feedback. Everyone deserves a comfortable, affirming bathroom experience!

Protocol for Gender Identity and Gender Expression- 2017

Our minister, Rev. Victoria Ingram, was part of a large delegation of faith leaders who appeared before city councillors in March 2017 to support the Protocol for Gender Identity and Gender Expression that city council subsequently unanimously adopted.

[Join Us at Pride Hamilton](#)



Pride Hamilton have announced their date for this year's Pride celebrations. >- Sunday June 18th! -< More information will be coming soon. The First...

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GenderFluent Series Presented by Foothills Unitarian

GenderFluent is a series of workshops and resources presented by Foothills Unitarian <https://foothillsuu.org/genderfluent/> Running throughout February. You can join a Sunday morning service, a...

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Vigil in honour of Bekett Noble

Sunday December 18, 2022 at 2pm Forecourt, Hamilton City Hall

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Trans Day of Remembrance Events

Trans Day of Remembrance is a day to mourn victims of anti-trans violence and to affirm solidarity with trans people everywhere. UUA Transgender Day of...

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Trans, Non-Binary &/or Genderqueer Focus Group

*** PLEASE NOTE *** The Focus Group Sessions are NOW FULL *** Intersecting, Anti-Racism & Anti-Oppression Consultant is looking for Trans, Non-Binary and/or Genderqueer participants...

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Join the Welcoming Congregation Team

September 2022, The Welcoming Congregation Team, under the Social Justice umbrella of Gender and Sexual Justice, is searching for both new team members, and a...

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Are You Interested in Joining the Welcoming Congregation Team?

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The First Pride

Rev. Michael J. Crumpler on the First Pride “On June 28, 1969, at the Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village NYC, Marsha “Pay It No Mind”...

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Hamilton Pride, July 8th & 9th

After going virtual during the pandemic, Hamilton Pride is back in person! The event will be indoors at the Hamilton Convention Centre. According to the...

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QueerVote.ca Releases ‘Report Card’ for Parties’ Positions on Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ Issues

Thursday, June 2nd is Election Day! If you have not already done so, make sure to make your voice heard in the provincial election. Among...

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SWAP Drop-in Centre Opens

Hamilton Sex Workers’ Action Program (SWAP) Opens Physical Space SWAP Hamilton has opened a drop-in centre to support sex workers in our community. The space...

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Roe V. Wade Poised to be Overturned

This week, a draft version of an American Supreme Court decision was leaked. If genuine and accurate (as justices could still change their votes before...

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Anti-Trans News from Across the Pond

The UK government has been facing pressure regarding their proposed conversion therapy ban– namely by trans-exclusionary groups whose aim is to remove protections for transgender...

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April 6th is International Asexuality Day

Asexuality is an ‘umbrella’ term that may be used by people who experience little to no sexual attraction. Asexual people may or may not choose...

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Democratic Activism in Hungary Thwarts anti-LGBTQ Referendum

Up to 20% of ballots were purposefully spoiled in a Hungarian Referendum this week, which, if passed, would have prevented schools from teaching about sexuality...

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March 31st is the Transgender Day of Visibility

At a time when, particularly in the United States, laws and policies are being crafted to erase representation of and visibility of Two Spirit and...

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Event: Walk & Talk for LGBTQIA+ Congregants

Sunday March 27, 2022 at 2pm – meet in the church parking lot. The Welcoming Congregation Team (AKA Gender and Sexual Justice) are inviting 2...

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No Hate In The Hammer Event, March 23rd

No Hate in the Hammer in partnership with Sisters in Spirit is presenting the 4th in a series of programs. This time it is focused...

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Criminalizing Trans Youth and Families in Texas

This past week, Texas Governor Greg Abbott signed off on a directive which functionally criminalizes existing as a transgender or nonbinary child in that state. ...

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Canada Leads the Pack with 10 Out Athletes Competing

The Beijing Olympics are underway, and alongside the controversies surrounding the Games, there is a bright spot: at least 34 'out' athletes will be competing...

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Well-Attended and Highly Informative Event

Monday's educational event regarding sex work and applying our principles to all people was well-attended and highly informative. Thank you to everyone who attended, asked...

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Upcoming Event, Sex Work: Considering the Inherent Worth and Dignity of Every Person

Our First Principle affirms the inherent worth and dignity of every person. How can we expand our knowledge and understanding in order to ensure that...

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Social Justice Team Continues to Learn

Social Justice Team Continues to Learn – A Message from Monica Bennett Here’s a change that I recently learned about... rather than use “2SLGBTIQ+”, we...

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Ivan Coyote opened our hearts, minds and wallets

A sold out crowd of over 300 people at the Westdale Theatre showed their appreciation for Ivan Coyote in the form of applause, laughter, tears,...

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Trans Workshop

The congregation held a trans workshop in 2017 and a well-attended discussion of our 2017 all-church read, Ivan Coyote’s Tomboy Survival Guide.

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Gender Neutral Washroom signs

In 2018, we installed new gender-neutral washroom signs developed with congregational feedback last year. We participate in Hamilton Pride events. And we continue efforts to...

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Protocol for Gender Identity and Gender Expression

Rev. Victoria Ingram speaks at a Hamilton city council meeting as part of a delegation from faith communities supporting a trans protocol for the city...

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