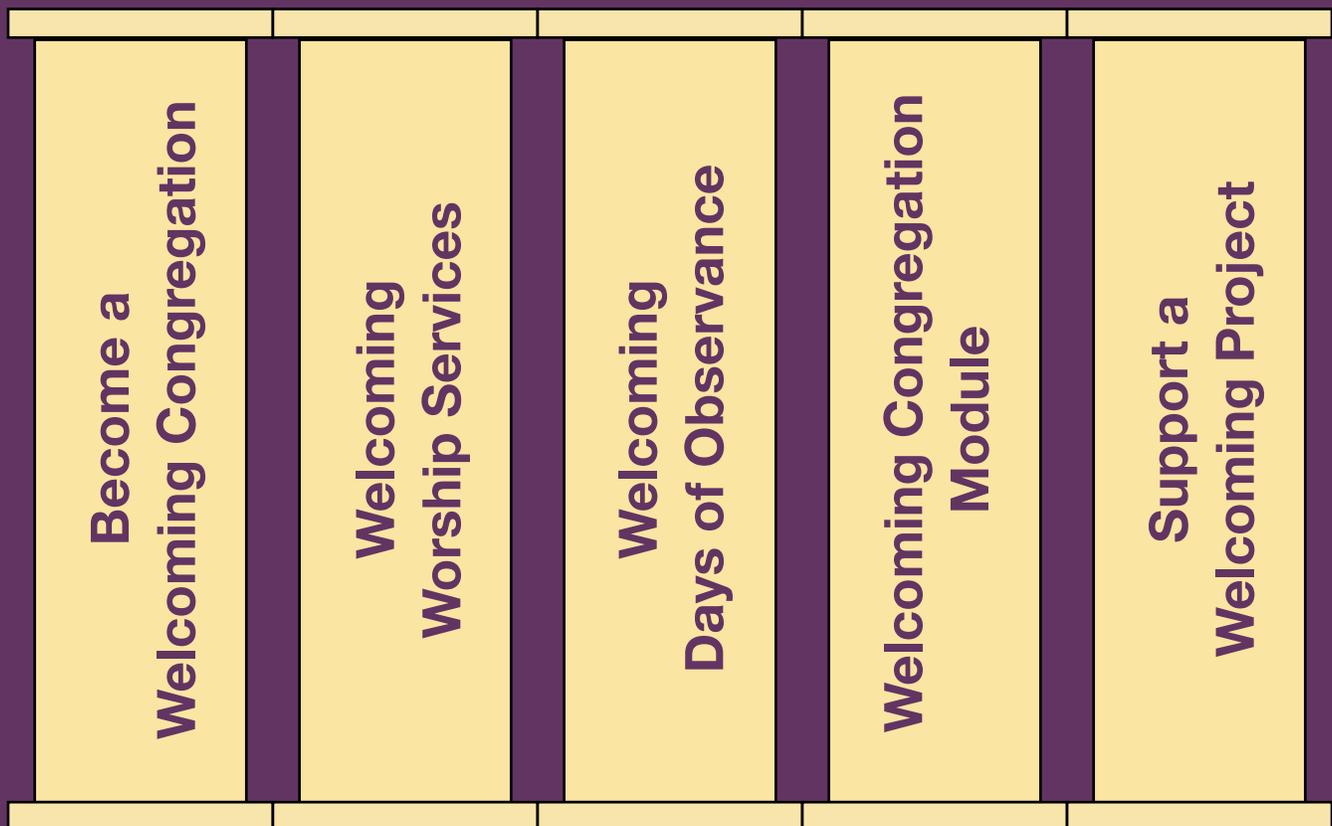




**LGBTQ+ / TGQNB\***

## **Welcoming Congregations**

**Five Practices of Welcome Renewal**



***All of who you are is sacred.  
All of who you are is welcome.***



# Unitarian Universalist Association

## LGBTQ+ / TGQNB\*

### Welcoming Congregations

#### **What is the Welcoming Congregations program?**

The Welcoming Congregation Program was launched in 1990 to address widespread homophobia and the exclusion of lesbian, gay, and bisexual people within Unitarian Universalism, and religion writ large. In hopes of fully living into our UUA beliefs and principles, namely “Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations,” we instituted the Welcoming Congregations program. Our aim was to encourage and support congregations in their efforts to outreach and support LGBTQ+ members and their community. Since then, the UUA has approved more than 800 congregations.

In recent years, having won the fight for marriage equality in 2015, it had seemed as if the work of LGBTQ+ welcome in the UUA had been complete. While many lesbian and gay Unitarian Universalists may have experienced full inclusion, bisexuals continue to struggle for visibility. Likewise, the transgender community is fighting for viability and inclusion in a faith lauded as radically inclusive. These harsh realities reveal that we are not as “Welcoming” as we think we are.

#### **What is the Welcoming Congregations “Renewal” program?**

Many Welcoming Congregations confess to not having updated or reviewed their LGBTQ+ programs and outreach since the 1990s. As such, the UUA unveiled the Welcoming Congregations renewal program in 2015. Our goal was, “To honor your original pledge, it’s

essential that new people in the congregation understand your congregation’s commitment to this work and your original involvement in the program, and learn about the current needs and concerns of LGBTQ+ people.” Over the past three years, we have renewed 18 of our 800 Welcoming Congregations.

#### **What is the Welcoming Congregations - Five Practices of Welcome Renewal program?**

In 2018, we wish to be bolder with our Welcome. Transgender Unitarian Universalists are still struggling to find community in UU congregations. Bisexual UUs suffer from invisibility while asexual, intersex, and polyamorous communities are wrestling with a progressive faith that does not privilege their truth. These and the many more social ills that plague our LGBTQ+ and TGQNB communities are calling us into a deeper commitment to insure that our Unitarian Universalist congregations are living into the Welcome that we boldly proclaim.

As such, we are unveiling the ***The Five Practices of Welcome Renewal***, which are:

1. Become a Welcoming Congregation
2. Welcoming Worship Services
3. Welcoming Days of Observance
4. Welcoming Congregation Module
5. Support a Welcoming Project

***Welcoming Congregations are congregations that are actively living into the Five Practices of Welcome by renewing every year.***



# Five Practices of Welcome Renewal

*All of who you are is sacred.  
All of who you are is welcome.*

The Five Practices of Welcome Renewal are five benchmarks that every congregation will need to integrate into congregational life in order to ensure that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, asexual, two-spirit, genderqueer, non-binary, and the like feel fully welcomed, centered, and embraced in our Unitarian Universalist congregation. Welcoming Congregations will be required to meet the following benchmarks annually in order to remain “current” as a Welcoming Congregation.

## Become a Welcoming Congregation

***Becoming a Welcoming Congregation** is the expectation of every Unitarian Universalist congregation. While over 800 congregations are currently “approved,” the nearly 300 congregations that are not are encouraged to fulfill the original objectives of the Welcoming Congregations application.*

## Welcoming Worship Services

*The second Practice of Welcome Renewal is incorporating **Welcoming Worship Services** into our ordinary calendar of worship every year. These services might occur during LGBTQ+ Pride Month or any other day of observance. An LGBTQ marriage ceremony, naming ritual, or remembrance ceremonies may also fulfill this objective.*

## Welcoming Days of Observance

*The third Practice of Welcome Renewal is an annual recognition and celebration of the **Welcoming Days of Observance**. These days and seasons are important to LGBTQ+ / TGQNB communities because they bring visibility and affirmation after generations of invisibility and erasure. These days remind all that “All of who you are is sacred. All of who you are is welcome.”*

## Welcoming Congregation Module

*The fourth Practice of Welcome Renewal is an annual opportunity for your congregation to experience a **Welcoming Congregation Module**. A WC module is a UUA approved seminar / webinar. Each year Multicultural Ministries office will offer at least one Welcoming Webinar engaging LGBTQ+ / TGQNB issues and topics. Welcoming Congregations may register for a webinar or may chose to sponsor a local seminar for it’s local congregation and community.*

## Support a Welcoming Project

*The fifth Practice of Welcome Renewal is **Support a Welcoming Project**. Welcoming Congregations are congregations that give generously of our gifts and resources. To remain current, congregation may donate a sizable donation to a local and national organization, campaign, or project that uplifts the dignity of LGBTQ+/TGQNB communities.*



# Five Practices of Welcome Renewal

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All of who you are is welcome.*

## How to Renew the Five Practices of Welcome

<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcoming Congregation Approval</b>	Visit <a href="http://www.uua.org/lgbtq">www.uua.org/lgbtq</a> and apply to become a <i>Welcoming Congregation</i> .
<b>2.</b>	<b>Welcoming Worship Services</b>	Include at least two <i>Welcoming Worship Services</i> into your liturgical schedule that uplifts the themes of LGBTQ+ / TGQNB welcome and inclusion.
<b>3.</b>	<b>Welcoming Days of Observance</b>	Celebrate, reflect, observe the <i>Welcoming Days of Observance</i> included on the <i>Welcoming Congregations Calendar</i> throughout the year.
<b>4.</b>	<b>Welcoming Congregation Module</b>	A <i>Welcoming Congregation Module</i> is a webinar or seminar made available to the congregation and community that informs, educates, and raises awareness about the issues and needs of the LGBTQ+ / TGQNB community. MGW will sponsor at least one <i>Welcoming Webinar</i> per year and programming resources for congregations to host a seminar of their own.
<b>5.</b>	<b>Support a Welcoming Project</b>	<i>Welcoming Congregations</i> are encouraged to donate to an LGBTQ+ / TGQNB organization, campaign, or project of their choice. For a list of suggested projects please contact <a href="mailto:lgbtq@uua.org">lgbtq@uua.org</a> .

- In order to remain “current,” Welcoming Congregations must renew the Five Practices of Welcome every year.
- Upon completion of all five pillars, the chair of the Welcoming Congregation committee will complete the automated renewal form.
- Upon review, the congregation will be renewed as “current” and receive a Five Practices of Welcome award letter and certificate for the year.
- The Five Practices of Welcome Renewal is per 12-month intervals, beginning October 2018.
- Members of a Welcoming Congregation “current” in the Five Practices of Welcome Renewal will receive a ribbon to wear at General Assembly.

*For more information on the Five Practices of Welcome Renewal, please visit [www.uua.org](http://www.uua.org) or contact [lgbtq@uua.org](mailto:lgbtq@uua.org).*