



Volume #1, November 2020

### **“The D.I.S.H.”**

So, what is the “D.I.S.H.”? **D**eveloping **I**nclusivity and **S**elfless **H**ospitality. We want to share our church, selflessly, and with extreme hospitality to **all** persons, but especially those that have been all too often been made to feel unwelcome or outright told they were not welcome, the LGBTQ+ community.

As we, First UCC, move forward with our Open and Affirming work, the O & A Committee wants to share information and resources with you to inform and inspire that inclusive hospitality we want to share out loud and clear with our community at large. The “D.I.S.H.” will come to you, quarterly, in your copy of the Scoop. Welcome to our first edition!

### **But, our church is a very friendly and welcoming church already. Isn't that enough? Why the O&A process?**

The following comes from the United Church of Christ's Open and Affirming Coalition website:

‘All Are Welcome’ isn't enough

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people of faith often experience emotional and spiritual injury in churches that condemn their capacity to love and seek love. Because they've learned that “All Are Welcome” usually doesn't apply to them, they can't assume that any church will be safe for them and their families.

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A public welcome by an Open and Affirming (ONA) church sends a clear message to LGBT seekers that they have a home in the United Church of Christ.

A congregation's affirmation and support through an ONA covenant can be a life-changing and life-saving experience—especially for LGBT youth.

A public welcome to LGBT seekers helps churches grow. When new ONA churches attract new members, many of them are young straight couples starting new families: they identify with the values ONA represents, and want their children to learn the faith in a welcoming church.

By adopting an ONA covenant, a congregation is taking seriously St. Paul's admonition to "accept one another, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God." (Romans 15:7, NIV)

## **I have questions about Open & Affirming. Where can I go to do some research?**

-Open and Affirming Coalition of the United Church of Christ:

<http://openandaffirming.org/>

-United Church of Christ/ONA: [http://www.ucc.org/lgbt\\_ona](http://www.ucc.org/lgbt_ona)

## **What is First UCC doing to inform the congregation?**

-Some things that are "in the works"...We are planning for book studies (virtual groups), Bible Studies (in person, recorded, possibly virtually), selecting a movie and making it available to "checkout" for small group viewing, Common Chords coming to sing in the spring, a question/comment box that you can ask for more information from the O & A Committee.

