



# Affirmation

United Methodists for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Concerns  
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## MARCHA VOTES TO DROP PROHIBITIONS

By J. Ann Craig and Rev. Luis F. Reyes

Congregations across the country are dropping the "UNITED" from in front of Methodist, but in August of 2023, MARCHA, the official United Methodist Hispanic caucus, was UNITED in its decision to drop the prohibitions against LGBTQ people. In a unanimous vote, MARCHA members were clear that they did not have to agree on all points in order to vote to stop the harm.

Affirmation Council member, Rev. Luis Reyes, spoke passionately and compassionately from the floor of the gathering. He urged the body to take a pastoral approach, not just to LGBTQ people, but to the whole church that is in need of ending harm and beginning healing. This is not about requiring clergy to do weddings for same sex couples, it is allowing clergy and congregations who are called to fulfill their ministries.



### MARCHA prays for candidates for bishop

A member of MARCHA stated "As a Hispanic coalition, we know what it is to be hurt because of who we are. It was time to make a change and move from being judgmental to listening to each other." Like John Wesley, If your heart is like mine, take my hand. If your biblical understanding is different than mine, let's talk.

## SUPPORT TRANS PEOPLE!

By Faryn V. Greer

This year, a total of 494 anti-LGBTQ bills were introduced in legislatures across 47 states. Even in places where LGBTQ rights are fairly well protected by law, the culture war creates a climate of fear that queer people, most especially trans\* and gender-expansive people, cope with every day. My partner and I have to research what rights we do and do not have every time we cross state lines, let alone leave the country. Gendered sports, gendered restrooms, and healthcare access are all sources of far-too-justified anxiety.



### Faryn and Terra are new Affirmation Council members and were married October 2023!

What is our role as Christians in this unsettling environment? God calls us to love and welcome all those God has created, most especially when they are facing rejection and marginalization in society. For cisgender people, here are three simple ways to ally with and advocate for your trans neighbors:'

(Support Trans People!...Continued on page 2)

*(Support Trans People...Continued from page #1)*

1. Pay attention to pronouns! Volunteer your pronouns in church meetings and any other gathering, even if you think your gender is obvious. Ask people how they'd like you to refer to them, and accept whatever answer they offer without judgment. Don't force people to share information they're uncomfortable sharing, but honor and respect what they do choose to share. If you know someone's pronouns and mess them up, correct yourself and then move on. This isn't about punishing people for misspeaking; it's about naming and seeing people for who they are and who God calls them to be.
2. Pay attention to legislation regarding trans rights and bodily autonomy. The ACLU is a great resource for this. Sign petitions, write to your legislators, and make sure those in power know that lots of people believe trans\* people are human beings like the rest of us who deserve the freedom to have families and play sports and use public restrooms. I assure you, those who want to restrict others' basic rights are making sure their legislators hear their voices. Silence is too great a risk.
3. Keep remembering trans people exist. Remember that reproductive organs are not synonymous with gender, and remember that "men and women" does not include all people. Be mindful of this reality every time your ministry or work involves dividing people into two groups based on gender, and look to see if there is a better way.

It is possible to create a world that is safe and welcoming for trans people. That possibility begins with transforming our churches and local communities, while expanding our own understanding, support, and engagement.

Source: <https://www.aclu.org/legislative-attacks-on-lgbtq-rights>

Trans\* is a term in and of itself. For me as a nonbinary person it feels more like something I can claim for myself, when transgender doesn't quite ring true. This article that includes the Oxford definition: <https://time.com/5211799/what-does-trans-asterisk-star-mean-dictionary/>

**Affirmation Newsletter**  
Only Affirmation's elected spokespersons may represent the official positions of this organization. Opinions here, signed or unsigned, are those of the writers, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Affirmation.

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#### Mission Statement

As an independent voice of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer people, Affirmation radically reclaims the compassionate and transforming gospel of Jesus Christ by relentlessly pursuing full inclusion in the Church as we journey with the Spirit in creating God's beloved community.

Adopted January 2005

\* Note: substitute the symbol "@" for the letters "\_at\_" in the email addresses.



## ROE V WADE AND THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY

By Julie Taylor

The impact of the 2022 U.S. Supreme Court decision to officially reverse Roe v. Wade is being revealed. Women go to emergency rooms and are sent to the parking lot until they are near death. 10 year old girls are being forced to give birth. A mother in Nebraska is sentenced to prison for giving her daughter abortion medication. Abortion was a constitutional right for 50 years. Now, half the states in the U.S. criminalize abortion. Some states are making travel, medications, and assistance for abortions a crime. Even birth control is at risk.

In the shadow of this new world, I interviewed Rev. Katey Zeh, Chief Executive Officer of the Religious Coalition of Reproductive Choice and author of two books, *A Complicated Choice: Making Space for Grief and Healing in the Pro-Choice Movement* and *Women Rise Up: Ancient Stories of Resistance for Today's Revolution*. Rev. Katey is an ordained Baptist minister and the co-host of the monthly podcast Kindreds, a show about faith, feminism, and friendship. Learn more at [rcrc.org](http://rcrc.org)



**KATEY ZEH, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE RELIGIOUS COALITION OF REPRODUCTIVE CHOICE**

### ***How far might this decision go?***

Abortion access is banned or under threat in more than half the states. Will healthcare providers contact the police when patients come to them with complications after an abortion?

### ***What implications do you see for the LGBTQ+ community?***

Many LGBTQ+ people are pregnant or want to be so they are directly impacted. This decision, alongside anti-trans legislation, threatens the LGBTQ+ community. Cisgender women are not the only ones who can become pregnant; trans men and nonbinary people may become pregnant and need reproductive services. Queer families are threatened by this decision and by the threats against marriage equality and other rights named by SCOTUS judges.

### ***How can we, Affirmation and others in the faith community help?***

*For RCRC, the immediate need is to ensure people in low-access states get the abortion care they need. Supporting local abortion funds and independent reproductive health clinics is critical. People in the faith community must speak out on how the anti-abortion agenda is part of a larger white Christian nationalist political agenda. We must participate in elections and run for public office. Churches may need to bring back networks like "The Clergy Consultation Service on Abortion" from the 1960s to advocate for those who seek, accompany, or assist with abortion services.*

***Julie Taylor is a member of Affirmation and served on the Council of Governors in the previous structure of the RCRC representing United Methodist Women from 2000 to 2013.***

## Life from Both Sides Now



*Living and Loving a Transgender Life Together*

Jan and Diane DeLap

## Life From Both Sides: Living and Loving a Transgender Life Together

by Jan and Diane DeLap

In an era when families of transgender kids are being criminalized for pursuing their child's healthcare, Diane DeLap's life story is an inspiration. Her book, *Life from Both Sides Now, Living and Loving a Transgender Life Together*, moves through a rough childhood to finding love with Jan with whom she shared 55 years of life. They traveled through religious and family rejection and finally found United Methodist communities of acceptance in Affirmation and RMN. Spoiler Alert! Don't miss the final chapters of backstage and ONSTAGE experiences with Barry Manilow. Finally, Diane's letter to her mother-in-law at the end of the book would be a help to anyone who is coming out to their family or church.

(Order online or contact Affirmation)

Diane and Jan served on the Affirmation Council from 2002 to 2010 when Jan began treatment for cancer. Diane was co-spokesperson and both Jan and Diane managed the newsletter.

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