

## Welcoming Committee Members

Dale Meyer-Curley

Carol Ewing

Jane Kelley

Sam King

Allison Staton

Eileen Sullivan

**Questions about the Program  
can also be addressed to  
Reverend Rali Weaver**

## Contact Information

[fcwelcomingcommittee@gmail.com](mailto:fcwelcomingcommittee@gmail.com)

## Coming Soon:

**A Welcoming Committee Page on  
Dedhamuu.org**

*"If you are a dreamer, come in.*

*If you are a dreamer, a wisher, a liar, a hoper,  
a prayer, a magic-bean buyer.*

*If you're a pretender, come sit by my fire for  
we have some flax-golden tales to spin.*

*Come in!*

*Come in!"*

*-Shel Silverstein*

*Information for the "Qualities" and "FAQs" section of this brochure cited from the UUA website:  
<http://www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/welcomingcongregation/index.shtml>*

## First Church and Parish



# Welcoming Congregation Program

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## Qualities of a Welcoming Congregation

- Includes and address the needs of b/g/l/t persons at every level of congregational life—in worship, in programs, in social occasions, and in rites of passage—welcoming not only their presence, but the gifts and particularities of their lives as well.
- Assumes the presence of b/g/l/t people and celebrates this diversity by having inclusive language and content in their worship.
- Fully incorporates the experiences of b/g/l/t persons throughout all programs, including religious education.
- Includes an affirmation and nondiscrimination clause in our by-laws and other official documents affecting all dimensions of congregational life, including membership, hiring practices, and the calling of religious professionals.
- Engages in outreach into the b/g/l/t community in its advertising and by actively supporting b/g/l/t affirmative groups.
- Offers congregational and ministerial support for union and memorial services for b/g/l/t persons, and for celebrations of...family definitions.
- Celebrates the lives of all people and welcomes same-sex couples, recognizing their committed relationships, and equally affirms displays of caring and affections without regard to sexual orientation.
- Seeks to nurture ongoing dialogue between bisexual, gay, lesbian, transgender, and heterosexual persons and to create deeper trust and sharing.
- Encourages the presence of a chapter of Interweave.
- Affirms and celebrates b/g/l/t issues and history during the church year.
- Attends to legislative developments and works to promote justice, freedom, and equality in the larger society.
- Speaks out when the rights of bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender people are at stake.
- Celebrates the lives of all people and their ways of expressing their love for each other.

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## Welcoming Sessions

### April 5th 12-2PM

“Introductions and Expectations”

### May 3rd 12-2PM

“What We Know, and How We Learned It”

### June 13th — 10 AM

Trip into Boston Pride Parade

### July (date to be determined)

MOVIE NIGHT—to be announced

### August (date to be determined)

MOVIE NIGHT—to be announced

### September 13th 12-2 PM

“The Common Elements of Oppression”

### October 4th 12-2 PM

“Gender Socialization and Homophobia”

### November 8th 12-2PM

“Experiences of BGLT People”

### November 22nd 12-2PM

“What Now?”

**All of the Sessions will be after Social Hour in the Dining Room. They are all BYOBB (Bring Your Own Brown Bag).**

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## Welcoming Congregation FAQs

### Why Just Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian and/or Transgender?

Why single out bisexual, gay, lesbian, and/or transgender people? The Rev. Douglas Morgan Strong probably states it best in the Welcoming Congregation manual: “For centuries, the church has been a leading force against sexual minorities. It is not surprising that gay people are reluctant to reach out to the very institution that oppresses them. Yet, gay, lesbian, [transgender], and bisexual people have no less need for warmth, caring, and affirmation than anyone else who calls the liberal church their religious home. In fact, as a subculture in society gay, lesbian, [transgender], and bisexual people may need our support more than the general population.”

### Aren't We Already A Welcoming Congregation?

Is it true that our church probably meets most of the qualifications for a Welcoming Congregation? Our church by-laws state that we do “not discriminate on the basis of age, race, occupation, gender, past religious affiliation, or sexual orientation.” Our membership already includes bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender persons who are active members, willing to give of themselves and share their experiences with us. However, official recognition as a Welcoming Congregation allows us to open our church as safe space for bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender persons; to take positions on oppression in our larger communities; and to accomplish outreach.