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hudrivpres.org/hrp-queer; hrpqueer.org

Purpose of this Partnership:

HRP Queer was formed to expand the safe places in our presbytery where youth, families, adults, and allies can discuss the intersections of gender identity, faith traditions and spirituality in our congregations and communities.

Who are we?

HRP Queer is a growing partnership of congregations within the Hudson River Presbytery, embracing a spirit of radical hospitality and love for one another and our LGBTQIA+ members and friends. We work together with each other to understand the challenges of change as the way forward and together following that path in our congregational and daily lives. We ask for God's help and your continued embrace of our LGBTQIA+ members and friends, as we live into becoming the church we hope to be: a sacred place where all are loved, safe, respected and valued for their gifts of the Spirit. Where, truly, all are welcome and know us as such a place, should they wish to find us. Simply, we need each other; all of *each others*, to be who we are created to be.

Considerations:

The list of "thoughts" on the back of this page are offered as "conversation starters" for help in discerning open discussions about what "welcoming" is and how we can listen to the prophetic voice that stirs in us and in our midst. Think of these items as a *menu* for topics and action – not as a charge to do them all. Check off the ones you do now, star the ones you'd like to do better, and then choose ones for which you would like to learn more. Discern. And let us know if we can help. We are just a call away.

Considerations:

- a) Establish a clear presence that welcoming the LGBTQIA+/Queer community on all social media, from website to newsletters.
- b) Consider a welcoming banner or flag on church property that carries the message of welcoming to passers-by, as well as those those who regularly attend.
- c) Make it possible for members of the congregation who have youth who are exploring gender expression or questioning to be heard.
- d) Review Christian Education, considering unwanted messages/bias in the curriculum.
- e) Take public roles as a congregation in local school boards, community councils and broader settings in supporting equal rights for all.
- f) Weave messages of welcoming for Queer folk in worship, prayer, and sermons.
- g) Follow HRPQueer, the presbytery website and newsletters to stay informed of activities and resources you might wish to join.
- h) Share your experiences, strength and hope with the presbytery so that others can learn from your efforts and ministries.
- i) Directly address the “clobber verses” of Scripture. This would be a *lively* activity for general membership to research prior to a discussion. These are the verses most often used to shut the church doors and “hand out shoe boxes” to LGBTQIA+ folk.
- j) Incorporate inclusive language in the church’s worship and publications. Set aside opportunities to talk about why language matters.
- k) Consider attending/hosting local and regional events as part of the Pride Community. Establish relationships with groups working with the LGBTQIA+ folks in your community. Scan the GENY workshop video on HRPqueer.org for conversation starters. (GENY will come to you, as well.)
- l) Tell your congregational story for Pride Month in June through video, pulpit supply, forums. Attend a local or regional Pride Parade with you church banner. Theme worship services around the Gospels and Pride Welcoming.
- m) And always, talk about God’s unconditional love for all.