



PRIDE ALLIANCE OF LONG ISLAND

IN PROUD ALLIANCE WITH

Old South Haven Presbyterian Church



present the

2nd Annual Interfaith Service for National Coming Out Day

NOTE ABOUT THE SERVICE:

This service is typed out to help us read along with what is said and to keep what is said as a reminder when we are done. Try not to only read along, but allow the words of the speakers to flow into your soul as they speak. It is our hope that the Spirit that moves within each of us moves you in a special way this evening and continues to bless you after you leave.

Rev. Thomas J. Philipp, Old South Haven Presbyterian Church:

Welcome to Old South Haven Church! We are here this evening in celebration of National Coming Out Day. Coming Out Day is about celebrating our differences, so an Interfaith Service like this one is a chance to come together as people who come from different faiths but who all believe in the Divine, and all believe that God created all of us and calls us good.

Hymn

The Love That Goes Unspoken

Brothers and sisters, we come from different backgrounds and experiences, different faiths and practices, but we also all come from the same place. So in a spirit of thanksgiving both for the gift of difference and the gift of a community that celebrates uniqueness, let us give thanks for this day and for this gathering.

ALL: I am a child of the divine. I celebrate the unique and wonderful person I have been created to be and I give thanks to the Spirit who created me.

Rev. William Feinberg, Hospice Care Network:

Some pray to a Creator we call by many different names, only a small number of which are: God, Allah, Yahweh, Emmanuel, The One, The Great Spirit, and Shang Ti. Each of our faiths is different, but we are all on the same journey with and in return to the Divine. We spend our lives falling into deeper love with our Creator, always learning more about God, about each other, and about ourselves.

Too many in this world cannot come out because it is too dangerous for them to do so. In places like Nicaragua, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, and Moscow to name just a few, we are beaten and mocked, sometimes tortured and killed because of who we are. This National Coming Out Day, it has been 9 years since Matthew Shepard was beaten and killed, and that was right here in our country. We remember the many around the world who still cannot come out for fear of being hurt or killed. We remember too the many around the world who can either not accept their own differences or who feel unloved because of who they are and choose to take their own lives.

ALL: I am a child of the divine. I celebrate the unique and wonderful person I have been created to be and I give thanks to the Spirit who created me.

Rev. Thomas J. Philipp, Old South Haven Presbyterian Church:

And we also remember the many who have just recently come out and are in the process of doing so, and those who will soon. Their journey right now is stressful and hard at times, and we remember them in solidarity for their purpose and their struggle. Coming out is a process and we are all coming out every day in different ways. And so we also pray that when we or our

community is challenged, we will be brave enough and strong in our faith to stand up to those who do not understand and do not know that we are all children of the Divine.

ALL: I am a child of the divine. I celebrate the unique and wonderful person I have been created to be and I give thanks to the Spirit who created me.

Fr. Michael Tesmacher, Prince Of Peace, Independent Catholic Church

Being brave doesn't mean that you're not scared. It means that if you are scared, you do the thing you're afraid of anyway. Coming out and living openly as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or as a straight-supportive person is an act of bravery and authenticity."¹

As a community of individuals who seek authenticity in its highest form, we come together this evening not as representatives of separate beliefs but as one shared voice. With our one voice we celebrate our differences but also celebrate our desire to come together as one people, all voyagers in this life on the same ship. We celebrate this evening at least one truth we all share, and that is the truth that we are all good people who care about a good thing outside of and above ourselves.

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Fr. Michael Tesmacher, Prince Of Peace, Independent Catholic Church

Reverend Maura from the Celtic Christian Church and Assistant Pastor at Prince of Peace will now lead us through a beautiful litany for National Coming Out Day.

A Litany of Coming Out²

Rev. Maura:

As God created the heavens and the earth and called them good,

ALL: God created each and every one of us, and calls us good!

Rev. Maura:

As God's creation includes and exhibits diversity and unity alike,

ALL: God created us as diverse persons, yet with the desire that we live together with all of creation in peace and unity!

¹ From the 2006 HRC Guide to Coming Out

² Litany written by Rev. Todd Freeman, Bethany Presbyterian Church, Dallas, 2002 Permission to reproduce, use, or adapt is granted.

Rev. Maura:

As a multicolored rainbow reflect the spectrum of light,

ALL: We reflect the spectrum of human sexuality!

Rev. Maura:

As straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons,

ALL: We strive to affirm and be who we have been created to be!

Rev. Maura:

As we encounter attitudes and acts of prejudice and injustice,

ALL: We remain assured that God is always with us and for us, and that God wills for our lives wholeness and well-being!

Rev. Maura:

As we discern the next step of our coming out, whether it be to our families of origin, families of choice, friends, coworkers, whomever,

ALL: We recognize that to live life fully we must take that next step, even though we cannot guarantee the reactions of others. We give thanks that we are never completely alone, that there are others whom we find along the path of our life's journey who can provide love and support and genuine acceptance - including God!

Hymn We'll Build A Land (#121 in the Unitarian/Universalist Hymnbook)

Rev. William Feinberg, Hospice Care Network:

"The essence of our being is love. Love is eternal and conquers all fears. We can learn to love ourselves and others by forgiving ourselves and others rather than judging. Forgiving is the greatest gift that we can give, especially to our selves. Health is an inner peace. Healing is releasing the past. We can let go of the past and the future. Now is the only real time for us. We can become 'love finders' rather than 'fault finders'. Forgiveness is the way to true health and happiness. We are students and teachers to each other."³

As students in our lives, may we always be open to learning new truths and not stubborn to place our fellow students in a place of permanent judgment. As teachers in our lives, may we share what we have learned with humility and not arrogance, remembering always that no matter how much we learn and know, the wisest words we can ever say are "I don't know".

³ From <http://www.geocities.com/pathways2eden/essence.html>

ALL: I am a child of the divine. I celebrate the unique and wonderful person I have been created to be and I give thanks to the Spirit who created me.

Rev. Thomas J. Philipp, Old South Haven Presbyterian Church:

Life is not a contest. It is not a race to knowledge or power or wealth or superiority. So as we celebrate this service of community, let us remember with deep gratefulness how blessed we all are, how fortunate we all are to be sharing this time together and how wonderful the gift of life really is. As one voice of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and straight allies, we join together today to give thanks for both our differences and our similarities. Augustine wrote that each thing, each person in this world is **good**. But he went on to say something even more powerful. He went on to say that each person, each thing, each part of creation when taken **TOGETHER** is **very, very good**. So let us remember this evening our shared goodness. Let us remember too the goodness of each person here today. Let us then go a step further and remember the goodness of even those people in this life who we don't always get along with too well. Let us remember that all people are created good and all people have the potential to do good for others.

Fr. Michael Tesmacher, Prince Of Peace, Independent Catholic Church

So when we are hurt, when we are maligned, when we are made fun of and mocked, when things aren't going well and everyone seems to be ganging up on us, let us remember, even in those times of struggle, that we are good. Goodness is in our nature. Goodness is in the nature even of our oppressors and those who hurt us. Goodness is a power higher and stronger, mightier and more powerful than any other force. We must become that goodness and we must not allow ourselves the easy slip into the coma of anger.

Reverend Maura, Celtic Christian Church and Assistant Pastor at Prince of Peace

Goodness does not have a gender or a sexual orientation. Goodness does not have a skin color or a religion. Goodness does not have a height or a weight or a nationality. Goodness is and we are one with that goodness. So let us always be mindful of the goodness of ourselves, of all people, and of all creation.

ALL: I am a child of the divine. I celebrate the unique and wonderful person I have been created to be and I give thanks to the Spirit who created me.

Rev. William Feinberg, Hospice Care Network:

As we complete this part of the evening, we know that the more important part follows. We have shared in this time our spirituality with one another, but the sharing of ourselves through conversation and community continues next. When we conclude this reflective time together, we will share conversation and friendship over food and drink. May we always be mindful that spirituality happens both within our soul and in our interactions with our sisters and brothers in the community of humanity.

This week we celebrate National Coming Out Day and we celebrate both the differences we have and the many things that make us all the same. In the days that follow this day, we will remember this time spent together reflecting on the goodness of all people and the journey we all take together. It is a journey filled with people from all backgrounds and faiths, but a journey that takes us all home to the same place, a place of love.

ALL: I am a child of the divine. I celebrate the unique and wonderful person I have been created to be and I give thanks to the Spirit who created me.

Rev. Thomas J. Philipp, Old South Haven Presbyterian Church:

There is a higher power that we are all at one with. There is a higher spirit that all of our spirits find a home in. There is a higher road we all walk on. As we walk this walk together and take this journey together, may we always remember that we are all students and we are all teachers for one another. When one of us is weak, we are all called to help that person. Life is a beautiful, spirit-filled journey we take together.

Fr. Michael Tesmacher, Prince Of Peace, Independent Catholic Church

In thanksgiving for all that we have shared and will continue to share here today, we say one more time:

ALL: I am a child of the divine. I celebrate the unique and wonderful person I have been created to be and I give thanks to the Spirit who created me.

Hymn

Though The Spirit's Gifts Are Many

Please join us for refreshments and more conversation.

Resources

Pride Alliance of Long Island

Coming Out All Year Long!

www.prideallianceofli.org

Pride Alliance of Long Island (PALI) is so proud to once again be facilitating an Interfaith Service for National Coming Out Day. This year we are extremely grateful to our host Rev. Thomas J. Philipp and Old South Haven Presbyterian Church. We are also very grateful to all of the other church leaders who attended and for the refreshments they brought for us. Their time, support and generosity of spirit is very much appreciated. Please visit the links below to learn more about those who came this year and other related links.

Old South Haven Presbyterian Church

Rev. Thomas J. Philipp

www.oldsouthhavenchurch.org

Hospice Care Network

Rev. William Feinberg

www.hospicecarenetwork.org

Prince of Peace Independent Catholic Church

Fr. Michael Tesmacher and Rev. Maura

www.orderofsaintluke.org/pop

Long Island Community Fellowship

Rev. Dr. G. Shane Hibbs

www.lcf.net

Coming Out Resources

HRC's Coming Out Guide can be found here:

http://www.hrc.org/about_us/7092.htm

Amnesty International

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/index.html>

(Click on "Our Issues" and then "LGBT Human Rights")

There are more PALI events for Coming Out Week tomorrow, Thursday and Friday so check our Website for details!