

Standing with and Celebrating Transgender and Non-Binary People

As leaders of diverse faith communities, we unite in affirming this fundamental truth: transgender and non-binary folk are beloved by God. No earthly power can separate you from love. You were created with divine purpose and intention: your gender identity and expression are sacred gifts to you and to our world.

Our community cannot be whole without you. Your presence deepens our capacity for compassion, wisdom, and justice.

We denounce violence in all its forms – physical, rhetorical, or legislative. Such violence contradicts our deepest religious values of dignity, mutual care, and love. There can be no exceptions or caveats that would justify cultivating hatred or distrust toward our neighbors. Prejudice and discrimination have no place in our sacred spaces or wider society. Transgender and non-binary people deserve to build lives filled with joy, purpose, and the freedom to thrive.

We witness the particular courage of transgender and non-binary youth, who show tremendous wisdom and authenticity in understanding and expressing their true selves. They deserve our unwavering support, protection, and celebration.

To our transgender and non-binary siblings: we offer you our steadfast encouragement, support, and love. We commit to standing beside you in times of challenge and celebration. We will raise our voices against those who would threaten your dignity and worth. We honor your courage, your faith, and your truth. The world needs you exactly as you are – your authentic self is a blessing to us all.

We pledge to:

- Make our houses of worship welcoming and affirming spaces
- Speak out against anti-transgender legislation and rhetoric

- Support access to gender-affirming care as a matter of religious freedom and human dignity
- Celebrate the gifts and leadership of transgender and non-binary people in our communities
- Listen to and learn from transgender and non-binary voices
- Work toward a world where every person can live freely and safely in their true identity

Signed,

The Reverend Dana Allen Walsh, South Church in Andover

The Reverend Genevieve Hosterman, South Church in Andover

Rabbi David Wilfond, Temple Emanuel, Andover

The Reverend Jeanette D. Leisk, Faith Lutheran Church, Andover

The Reverend Michael J. Hodges, Christ Church, Andover

The Reverend Renee E. Manning, West Parish Church, Andover

The Reverend Lee Bluemel, North Parish of North Andover, Unitarian Universalist

The Reverend Katrina Wuensch, West Parish Church, Andover

The Reverend Patricia R. Mitchell, Ballard Vale United Church, Andover

The Reverend Gina M. Finocchiaro

The Reverend Eleanor Prior, St. Paul's, North Andover

Rev. Michael Reed, Rolling Ridge Retreat & Conference Center

Rabbi Howard Mandell

Rev. Mack Hagins, First United Methodist Church, N. Andover

The Reverend Dr. Terri Ofori, North Andover

The Reverend Dr. Lawrence G. Jay, Rolling Ridge Retreat and Conference Center