

Press Release, January 23, 2009

Beginning in February and continuing throughout 2009, the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Whidbey Island will offer to same sex couples living on Whidbey Island "Proposal 2009: Standing on the Side of Love", the gift of the use of their new sanctuary and the services of their minister, the Rev. Kit Ketcham, to celebrate their marriages of the heart.

Unitarian Universalists have long been advocates of marriage equality for all couples, basing this advocacy on a theology of the inherent worth and dignity of every person and the belief that in a democratic society all should have equal civil rights.

For more information, contact the church office at 321-8656.

PROPOSAL 2009: STANDING ON THE SIDE OF LOVE

by Rev. Kit Ketcham, minister, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Whidbey Island

The passage of Proposition 8 in California and similar measures around the nation is a devastating blow to same sex couples everywhere and to us who care for them. Feeling compassion for couples whose committed relationships have been denigrated, disallowed, and even destroyed by these actions, we the Unitarian Universalist congregation of Whidbey Island and I, the minister of this congregation, wish to offer to same sex couples who live on Whidbey Island the use of our sanctuary and my services as officiant, as a gift, without charge, for wedding ceremonies which celebrate their commitment to each other.

We Unitarian Universalists believe strongly in the goodness of creation and that all beings have inherent worth and dignity; we believe, too, that all members of a democratic society should have equal civil rights. We advocate for marriage equality as a civil right for all couples and feel confident that one day this right will be a reality. Washington State has enacted measures which protect and legitimize same sex relationships in domestic partnership; these civil agreements are a step toward fairness. However, we believe that someday all will have the same right to all of marriage's protections, both legally and culturally.

At the same time, we believe that all religions should be free to determine their own standards for marriages within their traditions. Gradually, more and more faith communities are considering the issue of same sex marriage and making decisions about how they may want to recognize these relationships. We encourage this process of discernment, whether or not decisions made are similar to ours.

Each couple who wishes to accept this gift during the year 2009 will receive personal consultation, information for protecting each other legally through domestic partner registration or other means, a chance to design the ceremony that means the most to them, and the services of a skilled officiant.

We have no idea whether any same sex couples on Whidbey Island will wish to accept this gift, but we offer it regardless as an act of good will and outreach to our friends, family members, and neighbors who have found love with a member of their own gender. We want to support and encourage more love in our nation, not less.

Sincerely,  
The Rev. Kit Ketcham  
Minister  
Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Whidbey Island