

Opening Words
Kent Hemmen Saleska, Minister
UUCM BGLT Sunday
September 30, 2007

Welcome to this wonderful and joyous Sunday celebration of humanity and love! One of life's most profound challenges is the spiritual practice of uniting our inner emotions and aspirations with our outward behaviors. Nowhere is this spiritual challenge more clear in today's society than in the lives of people who identify as Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual or Transgender. Today we stand on the side of love as we listen to and participate in a few of the stories of struggles and celebration of these life journeys.

As we enter into this time of worship, this celebration of wonder and awe, I want to offer a brief reminder of our history and identity as a religious body.

1970 – The Unitarian Universalist General Assembly passed a resolution to end discrimination against people who are homosexual and bisexual.

1971 – Creation of the “About Your Sexuality” curriculum, which was designed to normalize and appreciate human sexuality, and included a positive view of homosexuality and bisexuality.

1979 – The Rev. Douglas Morgan Strong is called to be the minister of All Souls church in Augusta, Maine, becoming the first “out” gay man to serve a church in our Unitarian Universalist Association.

1984 – The Unitarian Universalist General Assembly passed a resolution that encouraged our ministers to perform same gender services of union.

1996 – The word “transgender” was added to the title of the UUA's “Office of Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual concerns” to reflect the work being done.

2002 – The Rev. Sean Parker Dennison is called to the South Valley Unitarian Universalist Society in Salt Lake City, Utah, becoming the first post-operative female-to-male transgender minister to serve one of our congregations in the Unitarian Universalist Association.

After years of intentional work, in 2002, this congregation (UUCM) met the requirements to become a Welcoming Congregation.

As the newly called minister of this congregation, I intend to carry on the Unitarian Universalist tradition of speaking out against injustice and moving forward in love, honoring sexual orientation and choice, providing ceremonies of union for all those who commit themselves in love, and human love and affection in its many forms.

At our best, our Unitarian Universalist congregations are communities that provide spiritual challenge, sustenance and wholeness for the human soul. May each one of us find a piece of wholeness today.

SHHH! IT'S A SECRET.

By Claire Cunningham

I have 2 daughters. The oldest, Kristen, is 27, smart, warm, fun, adventurous. She lives in Seattle, has earned a Master of Urban Planning and works for FEMA on hazard abatement.

I'm happy to report that she's seriously in love. So seriously that for the first time in her life she's going to be moving in with her lover. The twist in this story – one you probably saw coming – is that Kristen's partner is Chery, a woman. They're lesbians.

Kristen "came out" to me when she was 15 or 16, and since then I've been caught in a big game of "don't ask; don't tell." I always figured it was Kristen's call as to who should know "the truth," and to this day, we've been selective about who's been told. My family was told years ago, but only selected members of her Dad's (my former husband's) family is clued in. Why? Because Kristen is afraid she'll lose the love of people who are important to her. She's not ready to take the risk, and who can blame her?

But isn't it sad? We are still living in a world that would be happier if its non-heterosexual members would just keep quiet. Stay in the closet. Don't tell. Deny an essential part of themselves.

My daughter, Kristen, is smart, warm, fun, adventurous – one of the most lovable and good human beings around. She loves another woman, rather than a guy. And for that some people would label her and hate her.

So we play this game of secrets. Are we cowards? Or are we being smart?