

MARRIAGE EQUALITY POLICY

Plymouth Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
Des Moines, Iowa

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ has a long and proud history of leading the way for the expansion of human rights, including early opposition to slavery and the oppression of women, and

WHEREAS the United Church of Christ was the first American denomination to ordain an African American minister (1785) and the first female pastor (1853), and

WHEREAS in 1972 the United Church of Christ became the first denomination in America to ordain an openly gay man, and

WHEREAS in 1985 the General Synod of the United Church of Christ passed a resolution that called on congregations to declare themselves open to and affirming of gay, lesbian and bisexual people in the full life and ministry of the church, and

WHEREAS Plymouth Congregational Church in Des Moines became an Open and Affirming congregation in 1993, and has been recognizing commitment ceremonies of same sex couples since that time, and

WHEREAS, in 2005 the General Synod of the United Church of Christ adopted the resolution "Equal Marriage Rights for All" calling upon all settings of the United Church of Christ to engage in "serious, respectful, and prayerful discussion of the covenantal relationship of marriage and equal marriage rights for couples regardless of gender," and

WHEREAS the life and example of Jesus of Nazareth provides a model of radically inclusive love and abundant welcome for all; and

WHEREAS we proclaim ourselves to be listening to the voice of a Still Speaking God who calls us to work for justice for those who are marginalized; and

WHEREAS civil marriage carries with it significant access to institutional support, rights and benefits; and

WHEREAS equal marriage rights for couples regardless of gender is an issue deserving of serious, faithful discussion by people of faith, taking into consideration the long, complex history of marriage and family life, layered as it is with cultural practices, economic realities, political dynamics, religious history and biblical interpretation;

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED, that Plymouth Congregational Church of the United Church of Christ affirms equal access to the basic rights, institutional protections and quality of life conferred by the recognition of marriage; and

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the officers, ministers and members of Plymouth Congregational Church of the United Church of Christ are called upon to communicate this resolution to appropriate local, state and national legislators, urging them to support equal marriage rights for couples regardless of gender.

The Church Council
Plymouth Congregational Church
of the United Church of Christ
4126 Ingersoll Ave.
Des Moines, Iowa

Shelly Soorholtz, Moderator
January 26, 2010