

October 9, 2011

### **Broadway United Methodist Church - Commitment to Marriage Equality**

*Broadway's Mission Statement: God calls Broadway United Methodist Church to be a faith community embracing the diversity of our Chicago neighborhood and larger community.*

*We welcome all persons — celebrating the human family's God-given diversity of race, age, gender, sexual orientation, and physical or mental capacity.*

*We also welcome persons of all social and economic classes and faith backgrounds.*

*At Broadway, we are accepted into God's nurturing family, which invites us into spiritual growth through worship, study, mission, and social action.*

*We are grateful for the opportunities God gives us to experience and share the love of Christ.*

While we strive to extend the radical hospitality that God asks of us, we acknowledge that we have often failed to do so. We lament that many state and religious institutions, including the United Methodist Church, deny LGBTQI-identified couples equal access to marriage and all of its blessings, rights, and responsibilities. Currently, it is violation of UMC law for an ordained minister to preside over the marriage of two people of the same sex or gender. Additionally, it is a violation of church law for us to allow two people of the same sex or gender to exchange marriage vows in our sanctuary.

At Broadway, we believe that this current UMC law is unjust and inconsistent with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and God's abundant love, which is our true authority. In order to stand in fairness and in solidarity with LGBTQI members of the community, Broadway's policy on holy unions and marriage has been that no couple may marry in the church sanctuary. Rather, couples exchange vows off-site, and following that, couples may celebrate with the community in worship in the sanctuary. This policy was adopted in 2001 by congregational vote.

We rejoice that at this point in history, the arc of justice now bends toward marriage equality for all couples. As of June 1, 2011, the State of Illinois legally recognizes civil unions for same-gender couples, giving them access to state rights and obligations of civil marriage. This important law creates an opportunity for Broadway to open the doors of our sanctuary to all couples who wish to share their vows and seek the blessing of the church for their marriages.

We believe as an inclusive faith community and as ordained clergy we are called to minister to all. It is appropriate, indeed a privilege to celebrate all covenantal relationships between two persons who wish to marry each other. Our faith community affirms the sacred truth that the vows couples make are the heart of the union – both pastors and the congregation are witnesses to the power of a couple to name the promises they make to one another.

Today, until such time when it is deemed appropriate to change this policy, we, the congregation of Broadway United Methodist Church, affirm that God's grace is open to all, and we witness to that grace through our commitment to justice and equality in our congregation, the State of Illinois, the United Methodist Church, and the world. We, the congregation and ordained clergy, will honor any couple who seeks to commit their lives to one another in marriage and will celebrate all unions in the church sanctuary.