

**United Church of Chapel Hill**  
**Revised Open and Affirming Covenant**  
**November 2022**

**Turn**

As a community of faith that endeavors to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ, we confess as individuals and as the larger Christian Church, that we have hurt and sent people away; we have not recognized our common humanity nor sought community with people whose lives we find different from our own. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and gender and sexual minorities still suffer because of fear and hate and are condemned as sinners. The Church has shamed, demeaned, devalued, and denied affirmation of the love of our Creator God to those who do not identify as heterosexual or cisgender. The legacy of homophobia, transphobia, and queerphobia disconnect us from our true selves, from authentic interpersonal relationships, and from meaningful relationships with God and Their people. These wounds run deep and persist.

We, therefore, **turn** from our past ignorance and shortcomings as a Church, which have actively oppressed or ignored the oppression and suffering of God's children of myriad sexualities and gender identities.

**Celebrate**

In turning, we exuberantly **celebrate** and embrace all sexual and gender identities because they are God's beloved creation.

Rejoicing in God's creative and boundless love, we affirm and support *all* its expressions. Love is our guide. We celebrate queer individuals and relationships. Nothing can keep us from the love of God.

**Covenant**

God has called us into **covenant**, asking us to respond. The rainbow is the sign of a covenant recorded in Genesis between God, the Earth, and humankind. This was a sign that God's creation was good. A rainbow is not a rainbow unless all colors are represented. In the same way, we as members of Christ's body are all sacred, and we need each other.

**Commit**

We **commit**, with God's help, to putting our faith into action by loving, celebrating, and accepting everyone as created in the images of God.

God is still creating. We anticipate the unique identities in God's creation yet to be revealed.

We commit to learn, grow, laugh, and lament together. We know this is a continuing effort. We commit to our ongoing growth and the practice of God's extravagant welcome.

We affirm this covenant before God and with one another, looking to Jesus Christ, the author and perfecter of our faith.