

November 3

Hi I'm Barbara Allen, my pronouns are she, her, hers. I am a cis gendered queer woman.

6 years ago our congregation became a "Welcoming Congregation". Now the UUA has asked us to move from Welcoming 101 to Welcoming 401+. So today I'm going to give a quick review of Welcoming 101.

LGBTQIA2S +++

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, Two Spirit

So what do all these letters mean???

Lesbian. That's me. I am a woman who is sexually attracted to women. Pretty straightforward, so to speak.

Gay. Man who's sexually attracted to another man. Let's not use the word homosexual, we're not in the 50s anymore.

Bisexual. That's a person who's attracted to two or more genders, someone who is their gender or someone who is not.

Those are all sexual orientations.

Transgender is gender identity, how a person identifies their gender, not who they are sexually attracted to. This is someone whose sex that was assigned to them at birth, is different than who they know they are on the inside. This includes people who have medically transitioned as well as those who haven't. This includes adults, this includes kids.

Queer is sometimes used as an umbrella term to refer to all people with non-heterosexual orientations and people who are not cis gendered. Queer has been a word that LGBT folks have taken back so they could take the negativity away from the word and use it with pride. It's an identity that has been taken back as a word to be more inclusive, incorporating all of the LGBTQ+ community as in saying...the queer community.

Intersex. This is a person who is born with any of several variations in sex characteristics that do not fit the typical definitions of male or female bodies.

Asexual: That's a person who does not experience sexual attraction.

Two spirit refers to a person who identifies as having both a masculine and a feminine spirit, and was first used by Indigenous people to describe their sexual, gender and/or spiritual identity

So, to keep things easier, LGBTQ+ is often used. We'll start there and continue next month. There will be a quiz in June, so pay attention!!!

LANGUAGE: November 17

Today I want to explain why language is important, and why becoming a newly certified Welcoming Congregation is important too.

Folks here have said to me, "All those letters, it's too much, why should I learn all that?" "Enough with political correctness" and "I don't like that character on the TV show *Queer Eye*" because he's too swishy.

Our first principal: We believe in the inherent worth and dignity of every person. Language is important, because we all want to feel included, cared for, and respected. So when we say boys and girls or ladies and gentlemen we are not being as inclusive as we could be, we are being hurtful. When we think someone is being too gay.... well a St. Louis cop was told several times that would stop him from being promoted and he won a 20 million dollar lawsuit.... When we say someone is too swishy or too masculine, we're showing our own homophobia. Most importantly we're also hurting someone.

Change is always happening, as far as I can tell nobody rode here in horse and buggy and future members will arrive in self driving cars. We can all learn and change! And we, your friendly welcoming congregation committee want to make it informative and fun and something we can do together.