

SPIRITUALITY

Metro: Spirituality

Ainsworth United Church of Christ is a multicultural, multiracial, open and affirming, just peace congregation. (2941 NE Ainsworth St. 503-284-8767.)

Anawim Community of gay men meets weekly for Christian meditation and prayer. (7:30 pm Thursday. 503-281-0722.)

Atkinson Memorial Church, a Unitarian Universalist church, provides a spiritual home for those looking for a liberal-minded, supportive and caring congregation in Oregon City. (10:30 am Sunday. 710 Sixth St. 503-656-7296.)

Bridgeport United Church of Christ is a community of progressive, political people exploring and celebrating the Christian faith. We are sexual minority and straight, multicultural and multiracial, and our children are valued members. (10:30 am Sunday. 621 NE 76th Ave. 503-258-0992. www.bridgeportucc.org.)

Community of Welcoming Congregations, an interfaith ministry of spiritual congregations in Oregon and Southwest Washington that welcome and affirm people of all sexual orientations, provides pastoral care, advocacy, education and consultation. (503-665-8741. 2025 NE 23rd St., Gresham. Mailing address: PO Box 14948, Portland, OR 97293. www.welcomingcongregations.org.)

Congregation P'nai Or (Faces of Light) is a vibrant, egalitarian, Jewish Renewal congregation in Portland. Meets several times a month at St. Mark Presbyterian Church. (9750 SW Terwilliger Blvd. 503-248-4500. www.pnaiorpxd.org.)

Eastrose Fellowship Unitarian Universalist, a welcoming congregation, offers Sunday service and children's religious education. (10:30 am. 1133 NE 181st Ave., Gresham. 503-665-2628. office@eastrose.org. www.eastrose.org.)

Eckankar—Religion of the Light and Sound of God holds worship services and maintains a library of materials. Learn how you can work daily with the Divine Spirit in your own life. (10 am Sunday. 7904 SE Milwaukie Ave. 503-233-1595. www.eckankar.org.)

Elevation, a gay Christian rock band, invites you to join us for energetic, inspiring jams and powerful, spiritual messages at Metropolitan Community Church of Portland. (6 pm Sunday. 2400 NE Broadway. 503-281-8868.)

Enneagram Community of Portland offers mentoring, therapy, spiritual direction, classes, workshops and retreats. (enneagrampxd@aol.com. www.enneagramportland.com.)

Faith United Methodist Church is a welcoming congregation that values and affirms the sacredness of all people. We invite and encourage everyone to find a place in the family of God. (10:15 am Sunday. 27400 SE Stark St., Troutdale. 503-661-4520.)

First Congregational United Church of Christ is an open and affirming congregation in the liberal Christian tradition. Church school and nursery care. (10:25 am Sunday. 1126 SW Park Ave. 503-228-7219.)

First Congregational United Church of Christ of Hillsboro is an open and affirming congregation explicitly welcoming everyone into its Christian community, fellowship and worship. Bible and book study groups, Sunday school and nursery care. (10:30 am Sunday. 494 E Main St. 503-648-4341. www.hillsboro-ucc.org.)

First Unitarian Church of Portland is an open and affirming liberal religious community offering a wide range of programs to nurture spiritual growth, community and social justice. Sunday service 9 and 11 am. (1011 SW 12th Ave. 503-228-6389. www.firstunitarianportland.org.)

Gay and Lesbian Outreach (GALO) of St. Philip Neri Catholic Church celebrates an affirming Mass followed by a social. (7:30 pm Friday. Paulist Center, 2408 SE 16th Ave. 503-231-4955.)

Integrity is a group of sexual minority Episcopalians and friends. Various locations throughout Oregon. (Steven Norcross or Bruce 503-286-9111. brucepdor@comcast.net. www.integrityusa.org.)

Interfaith Spiritual Center houses spiritual directors from various world religious traditions, who are available for guidance, classes and retreats. (Second Floor, 3910 SE 11th Ave. 503-233-2026, ext. 3. www.interfaithspiritualcenter.com.)

Koinonia Catholic Community is a progressive, small faith community that gathers weekly to celebrate Eucharist at Bridgeport United Church of Christ. A welcoming congregation, Catholic in tradition and Ecumenical in membership. (6 pm Sunday. 621 NE 76th Ave. 503-699-0473. www.koinoniacommunity.org.)

Metanoia Peace Community United Methodist Church is a "house church" that brings gay and straight together. Daily morning prayer and Sunday evening worship. (503-281-3697. www.tearsoup.com/metanoia.)

Metropolitan Community Church of Portland holds ecumenical Sunday morning worship services at 9 and 11 am. Sunday school for children is held during the 11 am service. (2400 NE Broadway. 503-281-8868. info@mccportland.com. www.mccportland.com.)

Nichiren Buddhist Temple of Portland offers several weekly gatherings. Everyone welcome! (10 am Sunday, 7:30 am Tuesday and Thursday. 7:30 pm Wednesday meditation. 2025 SE Yamhill St. 503-232-8064. www.nichiren-shu.org/portland.)

Peace Church of the Brethren is a welcoming congregation. (11 am Sunday. 12727 SE Market St. 503-254-6380.)

Portland Center for Spiritual Growth is a center for worship, growth and leadership that adheres to an all-inclusive spiritual philosophy similar to 12-step, Unity and Religious Science. Impromptu wedding ceremonies available. (503-777-0727. www.portlandcenter.org.)

Portland Radical Faeries meet twice a month with potlucks and circles at the full moon and the new moon. Open to all men seeking alternative spiritual growth and community. Coffee hours start 9:30 am Saturdays at 3 Friends Coffeehouse. 201 SE 12th Ave. (503-235-0826. otter@pccz.com.)

Rose City Park Presbyterian Church, a member of the Community of Welcoming Congregations and the Covenant Network of Presbyterians, is a vibrant, inclusive community of faith. All God's children are welcome to join in our life and worship. (10 am Sunday. 1907 NE 45th Ave. www.rosecityparkpres.org.)

Seventh-Day Adventist Kinship is a support organization for former and current Adventists who are queer as well as their family and friends. (PO Box 49375, Sarasota, FL 34230-6375. 866-732-5677. office@sdakinship.org. www.sdakinship.org.)

Soka Gakkai International, a huge world peace Buddhist organization, holds monthly Rainbow Group meetings to talk about Buddhism and where queers can become familiar with a philosophy that has always had a place for everyone. (1805 SE Ankeny St. 503-230-1038. sgi-usa-oregon.org.)

Southminster Presbyterian Church is an active member of the Community of Welcoming Congregations. Sunday school, nursery care, classes, community service activities and events for all ages and interests. (9 am Sunday chapel service, 10 am Sunday main worship service. 12250 SW Denney Road, Beaverton. 503-644-2073. staff@southmin.com. www.southmin.com.)

St. Andrew Catholic Church invites all to join a diverse faith community for prayer and fellowship. (9:30 am Sunday; Noon Spanish language service. 806 NE Alberta St. 503-281-4429.)

St. Brigid Celtic Anabaptist Community is a newly developing group connecting ancient traditions and future visions to manifest liberty, peace and justice. Now meeting for discussion, study and meditation. (Sarah 503-757-7545. www.stbrigidcac.co.nr.)

St. James Lutheran Church, a Reconciled in Christ congregation, welcomes all people for traditional, liturgical worship where we experience God's reconciling love that sets all people free. (9 and 11 am Sunday. 1315 SW Park Ave. 503-227-2439. www.stjameslutheranportland.org.)

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church has been welcoming all people since 1863. (12:10 pm Wednesday and 7:45 and 10 am Sunday. Sunday school and child care at 10 am. 1432 SW 13th Ave. 503-223-6424.)

SisterSpirit offers women's spirituality celebrations, discussion groups, a drumming circle, workshops and classes. Schedule of events available. All women are welcome. (Suite 102, 3430 SE Belmont St. Mailing address: PO Box 9246, Portland, OR 97207. 503-736-3297. sistersp@teleport.com.)

Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Washington County is an open and affirming liberal religious community offering a variety of enrichment programs in addition to community and social action opportunities. (9 and 11 am Sunday. 22785 NW Birch St., Hillsboro. 503-648-1720. www.uuccwc.org.)

YOUTH

Metro: Youth

Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) strives to assure that each member of every school community is valued and respected, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. (12700 SW North Dakota St., Suite 180 #129, Tigard, OR 97223. 503-525-1177. glsen@glsenoregon.org. www.glsenoregon.org.)

Outside In operates a clinic for anyone who can't qualify for the Oregon Health Plan as well as needle exchange services that include those who inject hormones. Provide transitional housing for youth 20 and younger and for those HIV-positive and younger than 23. Need volunteers of all ages. (10 am-6 pm Monday-Friday, 1132 SW 13th Ave. 503-535-3800. www.outsidein.org.)

Pride Project brings together Washington County queer and questioning youth to plan and attend monthly social events. Also information, referral and advocacy services in Washington County. (Molly 503-260-5792. molly@prideproject.org.)

Sexual Minority Youth Resource Center (SMYRC) offers support, recreation, counseling and referral to gay, lesbian, bi and trans kids 23 and

University Park United Methodist Church is a small, diverse, open and progressive community of faith that extends a warm welcome to all people. (10 am Sunday. 4775 N Lombard St. 503-289-7843. www.upumc.net.)

Waverly Heights United Church of Christ is open and affirming with worship, children's school and child care. (10 am summer, 11 am school year. 3300 SE Woodward St. 503-238-1337. pastor@waverlyucc.org. www.waverlyucc.org.)

Wy'east Unitarian Universalist Congregation is an open and liberal religious community offering intergenerational services and religious education for youth and adults. We welcome gay, lesbian, bi and trans members and nurture spiritual growth living by Unitarian Universalist principles. (5 pm Sunday. 3300 SE Woodward St. 503-777-3704. www.wy'east.pnwd.uua.org.)

Zion United Church of Christ, an open and affirming congregation, is open to gay, lesbian, bi, trans and heterosexual people who wish to worship in a Christ-centered, warm, caring, multiage/race/cultural faith community. (11 am Sunday [10:30 am summer]. 2025 NE 23rd Ave., Gresham. 503-665-8741.)

Central Oregon: Spirituality

United Church of Christ Congregational is an open and affirming congregation in The Dalles. (9:20 am adult Sunday school, 10:30 am worship [9:30 am summer]. 111 E Fifth St. 541-296-2909. ucccng@netcnct.net. www.forministry.com/usorucfucccc.)

Washington: Spirituality

Abundant Life Center assists the community in spiritual growth. (10 am Sunday. 111 W 39th St., Vancouver. The Rev. Kathleen Verigin 360-573-2626. www.abundant-life-center.org.)

First Congregational United Church of Christ has been an open and affirming congregation since 1992, extending God's extravagant welcome to all people, no matter who they are or where they are on life's journey. (12:20 NE 68th St., Vancouver. 360-693-1476. www.vancouverucc.org.)

Longview United Methodist Church is welcoming and reconciling. (10 am Sunday. 2851 30th Ave., Longview. 360-425-4927.)

Metropolitan Church of the Gentle Shepherd welcomes you. Bible study follows morning worship. (10:30 am and 6:30 pm Sunday. 2200 Broadway St., Vancouver. The Rev. Harriet Barshofsky 360-695-1480.)

Michael Servitus Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, a Welcoming Congregation, provides a home for the liberal religious spirit. (9:30 and 11:15 am Sunday. 4505 E 18th St., Vancouver. 360-695-1891.)

St. Luke's Episcopal Church has welcomed all people since 1853. Traditional but never stuffy. (English: 8 and 10:30 am Sunday. Spanish: 1 pm Sunday. Child care at 10:30 am. 426 E Fourth Plain Blvd., Vancouver. The Rev. John Allen 360-696-0181. www.stlukeschurch.info.)

Willamette Valley: Spirituality

First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ is an open and affirming congregation offering worship and church school. Child care provided and wheelchair accessible. (9:30 am Sunday learning hour, 10:30 am worship. 700 Marion St. NE, Salem. 503-363-3660.)

Metropolitan Community Church Two Rivers is a Christian church with primary outreach in the sexual minorities community. (6:30 pm Sunday. 1166 Oak St., Eugene.)

younger. Drop-in computer access, pool tables and an informal place to hang out. Weekly trans, leadership and art support group meetings. (4-9 pm Wednesday, 4-11 pm Friday. 2100 SE Belmont St. 503-872-9864. www.smyrc.org.)

Eastern Oregon: Youth

Eastern Oregon Center for Independent Living offers support and advocacy to gay, lesbian, bi, trans and questioning youth in Eastern Oregon. (1021 SW Fifth Ave., Ontario. 541-889-3119 or 866-248-8369. eocil@eocil.org. www.eocil.org.)

Washington: Youth

Tripe Point offers education, support and advocacy to gay, lesbian, bi, trans and questioning youth in Vancouver. Meets every Tuesday in the basement of Youth House. (6-8 pm. 1112 Columbia St. John 360-695-1325.)

Willamette Valley: Youth

Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Transgender and Questioning Youth Group for ages 13 to 18 offers support, information and fun in Eugene. Free, confidential, adult-facilitated. (Drop in 4-6 pm Friday. Amazon Community Center, 2700 Hilyard St. 541-684-3466.)

ADVICE

Life's a beach

Should I bring my boyfriend along for this year's family vacation?



Ms. Behavior
by Meryl Cohn

DEAR MS. BEHAVIOR:
Every year my family goes on a weeklong vacation to the beach. By family I mean my mom, my brother, my sister-in-law and their kids (ages 10 to 13). When I was married, I came with my wife and our two kids (now 4 and 7 years old). Two years ago, I came out of the closet and got a divorce.

This year, I decided to invite my boyfriend. We've dated on and off since my divorce. Before inviting him, I forgot to mention it to my family. My brother is ultraconservative and not crazy about my gayness, but I get along well with my sister-in-law, so I approached her about bringing my significant other to the beach.

Her reply was: "David, this has always been a FAMILY VACATION. If your relationship with your boyfriend is stable enough that you consider him 'family,' I can sit my kids down and explain to them why Uncle Dave is bringing his friend and why they are going to be together at the end of the day. But if you don't think your relationship with your boyfriend is that stable, then I don't think it's fair to put our kids through this."

I agree with her to some degree; after all, we all paid for the house and should feel comfortable in it. My boyfriend, however, thinks she's full of crap, hiding her prejudice behind her kids' masks.

—David

DEAR DAVID:

Your boyfriend is right: What sort of torture would your sister-in-law be "putting the kids through" by explaining to them that you're gay? She wants confirmation that your relationship is "stable" before you're allowed to bring your boyfriend; by "stable" perhaps your sister-in-law really means permanent.

But would a heterosexual family member be questioned about the stability of his or her relationship and held to that same stringent standard? Would bringing your boyfriend really expose your sister-in-law's kids to hideous trauma that could only be tempered by a marriage oath that looks exactly like hers? It doesn't sound as though you've brought a confusing parade of men to dozens of family events and asked your nieces and nephews to call each of them "Uncle."

Besides, your family may not realize it, but kids who are 10 to 13 are most likely astute enough to realize Uncle Dave is gay, whether or not their parents sit them down and chat with them about it.

DEAR MS. BEHAVIOR:

My partner and I have two sons,

who are 5 and 11. Unfortunately, we live in a fairly traditional area, and we don't know other gay families. Our older son, Jack, seems totally comfortable with us and loves our family, except when he's angry or acting out.

But sometimes, when Jack is in a bad mood, he talks about how

embarrassing it is to have lesbian parents and how he can't have friends come over after school. Jack says he thinks being gay is "sick." When he's angry, he calls me "gay lord."

Jack has obviously begun to absorb some of the homophobia around him and the idea that gay people are inferior. Should we confront his beliefs and try to convince him otherwise? Or should we simply live our lives and have faith that he'll ultimately reject such attitudes because they go against his family experience?

—Lesbian Mom

DEAR LESBIAN MOM:

You're not going to be able to reform Jack's feelings or attitudes by convincing him that being gay is A-OK. But maybe you can arrange to have Jack talk with a neutral trusted adult (e.g., a liberal straight aunt or a guidance counselor). A more distant confidante may give him an outlet to explore the complexities of growing up in a family that's different, without needing to be oppositional.

Since you live in a "traditional" area, it may help to find other gay and lesbian families and spend time with them. Search (or advertise in) nearby gay and lesbian publications; for instance, you could join or organize a monthly family picnic or recreational group. Make a point of taking your family out of your hometown to places that are teeming with gay families. Try vacationing on queer cruises or at gay and lesbian resorts, and check out Family Week in Provincetown (www.familypride.org). Jack needs to be in regular contact with other gay families, so he doesn't feel isolated in his lesbian-mom experience.

If Jack still grows up to become a ball-busting anti-gay Republican, please know that you did your best and that it's not your fault. (That's what the ball-busting anti-gay Republicans tell themselves when their children turn into sweet, open-minded homos.)

MERYL COHN is the author of *Do What I Say: Ms. Behavior's Guide to Gay and Lesbian Etiquette*. Send questions to msbehavior@aol.com.