

Open and Affirming Covenant of Covina Community Church, A United Church of Christ

Covina Community Church, as a beloved community of God, offers this commitment to God and the people of God we are called to serve.

We celebrate the unique gifts of every person and treasure the diversity of sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions within our community.

As a Church, grounded in the teachings of Jesus and equipped to serve by the Holy Spirit, we proclaim the sacred beauty of every person and the profound potential for goodness within every child of God.

As a people who reflect the diversity of God's creative power, we recognize that none of us can be fully defined by just one aspect of our identity. We are shaped and known by our cultural, economic, educational, and geographic backgrounds. We are shaped and known by our physical and emotional capacities and challenges. We are shaped and known by our gender, gender expressions, and sexualities. We are shaped by our personal, communal, and both chosen and given familial experiences.

We believe that God can be found at work within every aspect of our life and that there is no aspect of our identity that disqualifies us from the love and grace of God.

We believe that all people are created in the image of God and are blessed with the very breath of God within us. We celebrate sacred moments in people's lives and proclaim God's presence with them, including:

- Baptism
- Communion
- Weddings
- Funerals

We welcome everyone to participate and will not exclude anyone from these spiritual practices and ceremonies which proclaim God's love and presence.

We believe that Covina Community Church has a unique role to play as an open and affirming community of care and a voice for love and justice. We acknowledge that the historic Church and many contemporary voices who claim to speak for God have deeply wounded people and caused great division and pain. In response, we feel it is our responsibility to:

- Affirm that the hurts of the past and present are real, systemic, and continue to cause harm.
- Work towards healing of all people and transformation of unjust systems, especially for those who have been wounded by religiously sanctioned harm.
- Remember, teach, and wrestle with our shared history, refusing to ignore it, deny it, or feign innocence.
- Share faith stories of all people.
- Deconstruct biblical "lobber passages" and manipulated traditions of the past.
- Affirm Jesus' teaching in the Bible to love others and uplift the humanity of all God's people.
- Highlight diverse people within scripture, including those who we would describe as LGBTQ+ in today's language.
- Stand as advocates and activists for the LGBTQ+ community and work for justice in our cultures and communities by participating, personally or collectively, in various venues as we are called and able.
- Partner with others, remembering that we cannot do everything alone.
- Keep educating ourselves about the tender, beautiful, vulnerable, and God-given ways that people discover and express themselves.