



Hosted by CLGS, the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies in Berkeley, California at Pacific School of Religion Campus

Transgender Religious Leaders Summit 2010



THEME

Transcending Tolerance / Transforming Faith Communities through Education

FRIDAY, November 5 and SATURDAY, November 6, 2010

at the

PACIFIC SCHOOL of RELIGION, 1798 Scenic Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94709

OBJECTIVE

Education is at the core of this Summit's objectives. It is more important today than ever to develop and utilize workable education models for transgender inclusion. Too long has *inclusion* taken a backseat to *tolerance*. Our faith communities must be transformed in their understanding, so they see their transgender congregants as full persons and valuable resources. Many of the concerns, issues and obstacles we face in our congregations are similar. Although our faith traditions may be different, we can come together around the following goals:

1. The full inclusion of transgender people in our faith communities
2. The creation of educational models for understanding transgender persons and trans issues
3. The identification and overcoming of cultural and religious obstacles
4. The development of a common language around trans people and trans issues

It is important to create environments of inclusion in our faith communities, so those who need support may obtain it. We believe that obstacles to inclusion are large but not insurmountable. Representatives affiliated with the following organizations will conduct seminars on their organizations' educational curricula on trans persons and trans issues:

INCLUDES

- ▶ **Institute for Welcoming Resources:** *IWR Transgender Education Program*
- ▶ **Our Whole Lives (OWL):** *Gender, Sexuality Education Program*
- ▶ **More Light Presbyterians:** *Welcoming Church Movement*
- ▶ **HRC Human Rights Campaign:** *Transgender Advocacy Program*
- ▶ **ELCA Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:** *Lutherans Concerned, LGBT Program*
- ▶ **TransTorah:** *Helping Jewish communities to be welcoming sanctuaries for all genders.*
- ▶ **TransEpiscopal:** *Helping to make the Episcopal Church welcoming to transgender.*
- ▶ **Unitarian Universalist Association:** *Welcoming Congregation Program*
- ▶ **Transgender in the Mainstream Church:** *Discussion on gender identity and gender fluidity*

Other 2010 SUMMIT highlights will include:

- ▶ **Presentations of Transgender Community Outreach Programs**
- ▶ **Faith Leaders Panel:** *Q&A session with leaders from welcoming and affirming congregations.*
- ▶ **Special Music Presentations:** *Transcendence Gospel Choir / Singer, Melanie Rose*
- ▶ **VIDEO OUTREACH:** *It Gets Better Video (a response to youth suicide) – Creating a message of hope and encouragement from a multi-faith group of transgender religious leaders to affirm trans and queer youth and encourage them to hang in there, find help, and that they're not alone.*

KEYNOTE
SPEAKER



**JUSTIN TANIS, Community Education and Outreach Manager,
The National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE)**

Justin has worked in the LGBT non-profit field for over 20 years as a community organizer, manager, educator and program specialist. He holds degrees from Mount Holyoke College, Harvard University, and San Francisco Theological Seminary, as well as certificates in graphic design and multimedia design. He is the author of *Trans-Gendered: Theology, Ministry and Communities of Faith and Opening the Door: Nine Keys to the Inclusion of Transgender People* (with Lisa Mottet), and is also published in *The Queer Bible Commentary* and *Take Back the Word*. Prior to working at NCTE, he served as Director of Leadership Development for Metropolitan Community Churches, an international organization serving the spiritual needs of LGBT people. He is now a member of a Unitarian Universalist congregation.

SPEAKERS
PANELISTS

We are very excited about our presenters and panelists this year!

MEGAN ROHRER, MDIV, Welcome Ministry

Pastor Megan Rohrer has a *MDiv degree* and is a candidate for the Doctorate of Ministry degree at *Pacific School of Religion*. Ordained in 2006, Megan is the *Executive Director of Welcome* with calls from *St. Francis Lutheran, Iglesia de Santa Maria y Marta, and Christ Church* in San Francisco. Megan is the project manager of *Project Homeless Connects: Growing Home Community Garden* and a board member of the *Sojourn Chaplaincy at San Francisco General Hospital*. Megan serves as the Director of Candidacy for *Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries* and on the Steering Committee for the *San Francisco Trans March*. Pastor Rohrer is an author for the *Human Rights Campaign's* publication, "*Out In Season: the Church Year Through Transgender Eyes.*" Megan is also the author of *Queerly Lutheran* and co-editor with Zander Keig of "*Letters For My Brothers: Transitional Wisdom in Retrospect.*"

REV. SEAN PARKER DENNISON, Unitarian Universalist Congregations

Rev. Sean Parker Dennison graduated from *Starr King School for the Ministry* in 2000 and was ordained the same year. He is currently serving as interim minister at the *Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of San Luis Obispo, CA* and has served congregations in Stockton, CA; Salt Lake City, UT; and Palo Alto, CA. He serves on the *Board of Starr King School for the Ministry in Berkeley, CA*, where he chairs the Admissions Committee. He has a partner, Toni, who is a Veterinary Assistant and has two grown children. Sean loves to read, blog (at <http://revsean.wordpress.com>) and play Scrabble and other online games. He is an enthusiastic adopter of social media and enjoys imagining how to engage in ministry in new ways, reaching out to the generation of "digital natives." He is active in anti-oppression work, especially around BGLT issues and anti-racism and multi-culturalism.

REV. VICKI GRAY, TransEpiscopal

A retired Foreign Service Officer, Vicki holds a *PhD* in Political Science. She is a deacon at *Christ the Lord Church* in Pinole, CA; serves on the *Executive Council of the Episcopal Diocese of California*; and is active in the diocese and beyond on a variety of peace, justice and LGBT issues.

BARBARA SATIN, Institute for Welcoming Resources & Faith Work Associate

Barbara Satin is a transgender activist whose energies are focused on LGBT faith and aging issues. She works part-time for the *Institute for Welcoming Resources* in Minneapolis. *IWR* is a program of the *National Gay and Lesbian Task Force* which coordinates pro-LGBT efforts within faith communities throughout the U.S. Barbara is a member of *Spirit of the Lakes UCC, Minneapolis*. She currently serves on the Executive Council of the *United Church of Christ*, the first transgender woman to have a national leadership role in the denomination. From 2002 to 2006, she served as the Moderator of the *UCC Coalition for LGBT Concerns*. In 2008, she received the *Allan Morrow Award* from *The Task Force* for her work on LGBT aging.

REV. WILL MCGARVEY, Pastor Community Presbyterian Church, More Light Presbyterians.

Rev. Will McGarvey has been married to his partner Becky for 20 years, and is blessed with two brilliant teenage children, Ian and Megan. For the last six years, Will has been pastor at *Community Presbyterian Church of Pittsburg, CA*, (Presbyterian Church USA/United Church of Christ congregation). Will did his seminary studies at *San Francisco Theological Seminary*, where he specialized in theology of the environment. Will graduated from *Westminster College of Salt Lake City*, where he graduated with a major in the Social Sciences and a Religion minor. Will spent five and a half years doing youth ministry in Salt Lake City before seminary, and has been active in the ecumenical and interfaith communities in both Utah and Northern California. A child of the Utah Pioneers, Will grew up in the LDS tradition and served a two-year mission in New England. Will is active in many justice-seeking endeavors, including *More Light Presbyterians*, comprehensive immigration reform, hunger relief, housing, peacemaking in Israel-Palestine, and serves on the Advisory Board of the *Bay Area Coalition of Welcoming Congregations*.

MARK MCKENZIE, Pacific School of Religion

Mark identified as lesbian before transitioning at the age of 54 in 2003. Mark was licensed in 1986 to pastor in the Metropolitan Community Churches and ordained in 1989. Mark pastored the *MCC in Eugene* from 1986 - 1994. From 1995 through 2003, Mark began a wilderness journey, leading him to find himself which ultimately lead him back to a spiritual life. After he transitioned in 2003, he decided to follow a dream to attend Seminary and enrolled at the *Pacific School of Religion* in 2007, where he is working on his Masters of Divinity degree. Mark married his wife, Kathleen Ellis in 2007.

SANDRA STEWART, Founder of Gender Tree Online Ministry

Sandra Stewart is a native Californian raised in Napa. She holds a BA in Anthropology from *California State University at Fullerton* (1976) and a Bachelor of Social Work from the *University of Toledo* (2007.) Over the last decade, she has been involved extensively in the transgender movement as an author of many articles, owner of two websites for the transgender community, and as facilitator for *Lambda Mu*, the *Tri-Ess* group in Michigan. Sandra has been married for 36 years, and has three children and one grandchild.

REV. BONNIE DLOTT, Minister of Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of North Bay, NAPA, UU Associations Trainer for “the program “Our Whole Lives”

Bonnie is a native of the Bay Area, and earned her undergraduate degree from the *University of California at Berkeley* in Molecular Biology. She holds a *PhD* from the *UCLA School of Medicine, Dept. of Biological Chemistry*. She was called to the *Unitarian Universalist Ministry* in 2000, and now serves the *Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of North Bay* in Napa, California. She has been a sexuality educator for ten years, and serves as an *Our Whole Lives Trainer* for the *Unitarian Universalist Association*. Rev. Dlott is especially committed to education around issues of sexuality and justice, and is thrilled to serve in a faith tradition that welcomes and affirms all people, regardless of affectional orientation and/or gender expression/identity. She lives in the Bay Area with her husband and two children.

RANDI KLEIN, Founder of Light in the Closet Ministry

Randi grew up in the Christian church serving in various ministry capacities, including Art Director at *Jews for Jesus* in San Francisco, California; Art Director for the Christian publication *Radix Magazine* in Berkeley, California; and Executive Board Member of *True North Christian Fellowship*. Since 2000, Randi has been an advocate for the rights of the transgender community. In 2008, Randi was commissioned as a *Stephen Minister at Hillside Covenant Church* in Walnut Creek, CA. Randi has published various articles addressing Christian faith issues and acceptance in the mainstream Christian church. Randi is the founder of *Light in the Closet Ministry*, which advocates grace for those who are struggling with their gender identity by offering lay-counseling, resources and encouragement. Randi has a BFA from *San Jose State University*. Randi has been married for 28 years and has three children.

RABBI LEVI ALTER, President, Female-To-Male International

Rabbi Levi Alter is the spiritual leader of his congregation of elderly Holocaust survivors and the CEO of a health care corporation. His previous professional experiences include being on the clinical faculty of *UCLA Medical Center*, a university department chairman, and executive director of a television production company and a computer consulting firm. His current work for trans inclusion in religion, healthcare and other fields includes being a keynote speaker and organizer for major conferences and events, interviews on *LOGO*, *MTV*, *MSNBC*, *Newsweek*, *BBC Radio* and many other documentaries and media appearances. He is the fourth of five generations of intersex individuals in his family and is the President of *FTM International*, spanning 18 countries and 24 years of building FTM lives, families and communities (www.FTML.org).

REV. SKY ANDERSON, Staff Member, Metropolitan Community Church (MCCS)

Rev. Sky graduated from *Middlesex Community College* in Massachusetts. He attended *Boston College* and the *University of Mass*. Rev. Sky graduated from the program “Leadership in Ministry/ Diocese of San Jose.” He was licensed by the *Metropolitan Community Church* in the late 1970’s. Rev. Sky has served in MCC churches in Boston, Worcester, Detroit and became Pastor of *MCC San Jose* in the late 1970’s. He transitioned while in fellowship with MCC, and was ordained in 1979 as an open transgender F2M clergy person in front of the General Conference. While Anita Bryant was raving in Florida, Senator John Briggs call a meeting of 40 Evangelical churches to meet in downtown San Jose to prepare to drive out the queers! Rev. Sky rallied local church and community leaders to oppose the senator’s efforts. Rev. Sky served at *MCC San Jose* until the early 80’s. He married his wife Fay in 1980 and they have adopted 5 children with special needs. He has worked with homeless people at *Tent City* and on the staff at *St. Paul’s United Methodist Church*. Rev. Sky was Program Director for the *Emergency Housing Consortium*.

MEGAN MORE, MDIV Student, Claremont School of Theology, MCC in the Valley

Megan is openly transgendered, full time, and active in her church. Megan is busy working on transgender outreach and ministry. She works as a support and resource for those who have issues with their gender identity, and helps to welcome them openly into her church home at the *Metropolitan Community Church* in the Valley, North Hollywood, CA. Megan has a BA in History from *California State University, Los Angeles*. She is currently at the *Claremont School of Theology* working on her Masters of Divinity and works with the MCC in the Valley in North Hollywood as a student clergy. Megan also designed an electronic church service specifically for the trans community in Los Angeles, which is also broadcast live and archived online through USTREAM. Megan is happily married.

RABBI REUBEN ZELLMAN, Assistant Rabbi and Music Director, Congregation Beth El

Reuben Zellman is the Assistant Rabbi and Music Director at Congregation Beth El in Berkeley, California. He has written extensively about gender identity, sexuality and Judaism, and has taught at congregations, conferences and universities around the U.S. He serves on the advisory boards of Keshet/Jewish Mosaic and the Transgender Economic Empowerment Initiative of Jewish Vocational Services, among others. As a professional singer and choral conductor, he sings with San Francisco Renaissance Voices and is involved with other classical and Jewish music endeavors.

RABBI ELLIOT KUKLA, Bay Area Jewish Healing Center

Rabbi Elliot Kukla is a rabbi at the *Bay Area Jewish Healing Center* in San Francisco, providing spiritual care to those struggling with illness, grieving or dying. Elliot was ordained by *Hebrew Union College* in Los Angeles and trained in chaplaincy at the *University of California at San Francisco (UCSF) Medical Center*, specializing in mental health at *Langley Porter Psychiatric Institute*. Before moving to San Francisco he served congregations in his hometown Toronto, as well as Los Angeles and Lubbock, TX. In 2010, Elliot was one of two guest editors of a special issue of *Zeek: A Journal of Jewish Thought and Culture* called “The Spirituality of Healing.” In 2009, he was a visiting faculty member in pastoral care at *Starr King School for the Ministry* in Berkeley, CA. His articles are published in numerous magazines including *Shm’a*, *Zeek*, and *Lilith*; as well as anthologized widely including the recent books “*Torah Queeries*” (NYU Press 2009), “*The Passionate Torah*” (NYU press 2009); “*Balancing on the Mechitza*” (North Atlantic Books 2010) and “*Righteous Indignation*” (Jewish Lights 2008). Elliot’s liturgy and teachings on gender and diversity have been used in congregations across the country, as well as a part of HRC’s “*Gender Identity and Our Faith Communities: A Guide for Transgender Advocacy*” curriculum. Rabbi Kukla has lectured on spirituality and mental illness, aging and dying, as well as on Judaism and gender and sexual diversity across the US and Canada.

REV. CEDRIC A. HARMON, Many Voices / Worship Resources Coordinator

Cedric is a native Midwesterner with Southern and New England influences—a surprise last child to older parents who shared with him the gift of experience and wisdom. He has a BS in Media Management from *Emerson College* and has completed extensive graduate work at *Wesley Seminary*. Cedric’s deep faith calls him to do the work of justice and equality and equip others to do the same. For 13 years, he has identified clergy, provided them with media training, and brought them to Washington, DC for legislative testimony about issues of religion and government. He’s also known for his writing and television appearances—again on human rights and social justice—and serves on several boards having to do with sexuality and religion. Cedric says, “*My first spiritual sanctuary is in the capacity Associate Pastor of a radically inclusive congregation. My second sanctuary is the kitchen – a place of creativity and aggressive chopping. I am a lover of authentic, genuine and welcoming worship and time spent by the water (I am a Pisces). Poetry feeds my soul and propels my progress. A dreamer of dreams, I envision Many Voices as creative space for communities of faith as they develop new and enriching worship celebrations – inclusive of all, exclusive of none.*”



FRIDAY, November 5 and SATURDAY, November 6, 2010

All Sessions take place at the PACIFIC SCHOOL of RELIGION, 1798 Scenic Avenue, Berkeley, California

FRIDAY FRIDAY, November 5, 2010

3:30 pm - 5:00 pm **Registration** (*late registration till 6:00 pm*)

5:00 pm - 5:30 pm **Invocation and Welcoming Shabbat**
RABBI ELLIOT KUKLA and RABBI REUBEN ZELLMAN

5:30 pm - 6:30 pm **Buffet Dinner/Reception**
Singer MELANIE ROSE / DONNA SIMMONS performing

6:30 pm - 8:30 pm **Opening Session**

1. Welcome: **Bernie Schlager**, Executive Director, CLGS
 2. Objectives of the conference and information. *Questions answered at this time.*
 3. **KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Justin Tanis**, *Community Education and Outreach Manager of The National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE)*
- TOPIC: "Transgender Equality and the Work of Faith"**
The Role of Religious Leadership in a Transphobic World

SATURDAY SATURDAY, November 6, 2010

7:30 am - 8:30 am **Continental Breakfast**
Questions and Announcements

8:30 am - 10:00 am *SESSION 1 (choose one)*

HRC Human Rights Campaign: *Transgender Advocacy Program*
Speaker: MEGAN ROHRER, MDIV, Welcome Ministry

More Light Presbyterians: *Welcoming Church Movement*
Speaker: REV. WILL MCGARVEY, Pastor of Community Presbyterian Church

Transgender in the Mainstream Church: *Discussion on gender identity and gender fluidity*
Speaker: SANDRA STEWART, Founder of Gender Tree Online Ministry
Speaker: RANDI KLEIN, Founder of Light in the Closet Ministry

10:10 am - 11:40 am *SESSION 2 (choose one)*

Institute for Welcoming Resources: *IWR Transgender Education Program*
Speaker: BARBARA SATIN, Institute for Welcoming Resources & Faith Work Associate

TransEpiscopal: *Helping to make the Episcopal Church welcoming to transgender*
Speaker: REV. VICKI GRAY, TransEpiscopal

Our Whole Lives (OWL): *Gender, Sexuality Education Program*

Speaker: REV. BONNIE DLOTT, Minister of Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of North Bay, NAPA, UU Associations Trainer for "Our Whole Lives" (OWL)

11:40 am - 12:30 pm **BUFFET LUNCH**

LUNCH TOPIC: "Top Ten Objections to Fellowship"

(A humorous but sometimes serious look at why some faith communities have issues concerning transgender. Attendees will be asked to write down some of their more interesting questions and how they answered them - if indeed they could.)

12:30 pm - 2:00 pm **SESSION 3 (choose one)**

Unitarian Universalist Association: Welcoming Congregation Program

Speaker: REV. SEAN PARKER DENNISON, Unitarian Universalist Congregations

ELCA Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: Lutherans Concerned, LGBT Program

Speaker: MEGAN ROHRER, MDIV

TransTorah: Helping Jewish communities to be welcoming sanctuaries for people of all genders.

Speakers: RABBI ELLIOT KUKLA, Bay Area Jewish Healing Center

RABBI REUBEN ZELLMAN, Assistant Rabbi and Music Director Congregation Beth El

2:05 pm - 3:15 pm **SESSION 4**

New Outreaches, Stories and Ministries: Transgender Community Outreach Programs

Attendees will have a chance to present information about their individual outreach programs

Speaker: MEGAN MORE, Student, Claremont School of Theology

MCC Church, Transgender Ministry

Speaker: RABBI LEVI ALTER, President, Female-To-Male International

TranSpirituality: Trans Inclusion in Religion

Speaker: CEDRIC HARMON, Many Voices

Many Voices: Transgender Resources

3:15 pm - 4:30 pm **SESSION 5 - ACTION GROUPS**

GROUP 1: "Come out to bring them in": How does who we are as clerics inform our congregation?

How do we balance our truth with our ministry, and to what end? This session will include stories from the field, and discussion about what has formed the communities we have been a part of as leaders or congregants.

GROUPS 1, 2, 3: OTHER ACTION GROUPS:

Attendees will break up into focus groups based on topics of interest. These action groups will focus on developing common language for communication and on areas of education that need to be addressed. Networking will be facilitated, and from meeting notes, take-a-ways will be developed.

ONGOING...VIDEO OUTREACH: "It Gets Better" (a video response to youth suicide) -- Creating a message of hope and encouragement from a multi-faith group of transgender religious leaders, to affirm trans and queer youth and encourage them to hang in there, find help, and that they're not alone.

Please prepare a statement of a personal nature if you wish your voice to be added to this video outreach. During session 4 (and also though out the day) individuals will making brief statements of encouragement. We hope to include personal stories as they relate to the issue of suicide. This will be used to create a short 20-30 minute informational video.

4:30 pm - 6:15 pm / Dinner Break (Meal not provided - there are lots of great places to eat close by.)
An opportunity to get to know one or more of those attending. Some dinner opportunities will be arranged, but we encourage you to continue your "action group" conversations.

SATURDAY EVENING in the Chapel: *Even if you cannot join us for the full day, please come Saturday evening for this special session and musical presentation.*

6:20 pm - 7:50 pm **Faith Leaders Panel Discussion**

A panel of faith leaders from accepting and affirming congregations and organizations will address questions concerning inclusion of transgender in faith communities and what is being done to further education. Comment/question cards will be provided in advance.

This session includes 3 parts:

1. Introduction (10 min) of panel members and their backgrounds

REV. VICKI GRAY / REV. SKY ANDERSON / RABBI LEVI ALTER

MARK MCKENZIE / JUSTIN TANIS / BARBARA SATIN

2. Panel Discussion: (1 hour) Questions from comment cards will be asked in a Q and A format

3. Follow-up Questions: (20 min) will be taken from those in attendance

7:50 pm - 8:00 pm **Wrap-up, Closing Comments and Thanks**

8:00 pm - 9:00 pm **Special Music Presentations**

The lovely chapel on the Pacific School of Religion campus will come alive with music.

Singer: MELANIE ROSE / Accompanist: DONNA SIMMONS *(Teacher and performer)*

As a child, Melanie would sing in the evening when the farm work was done. Since then, Melanie has performed in many churches. Her long career includes work on television and radio. She performed at California Dream'n for three years and at other transgender events. Melanie has a lovely gospel style flavored with a country twang.

Music from TRANSCENDENCE GOSPEL CHOIR

Ministry of the City of Refuge, San Francisco, CA

The Transcendence Gospel Choir (TGC) is a music ministry for the transgender community and performs Gospel music in worship services, at pride events, and as outreach to the community itself. Recognizing that religion is one of the main weapons used to justify and perpetuate misogyny, homophobia, transphobia, and intolerance of diversity, the choir's mission is to challenge those ideas from within a place of faith. Because transgender people throughout history have played significant roles in spiritual worship, TGC strives to empower that community and reclaim that calling. They endeavor to challenge intolerance and hatred, transcend boundaries and restore hope. The Transcendence Gospel Choir has performed at many high-profile events and now brings their spirit-filled and affirming music to our 2010 Summit.

SUMMIT SPONSORS

Human Rights Campaign (HRC)

The Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies in Religion and Ministry (CLGS)

Light in the Closet Ministry

CONTRIBUTORS:

the National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE)

Ruth Bramham / Melanie Rose

Register at: www.clgs.org

Or call, Randi Klein, Summit Organizer at (925) 586-4651 with questions or to register.

Or send an email to: rklein@lightinthecloset.org