

For Immediate Release

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## **OCUUF Equality Project Examines Laws Affecting LGBTQ+ Community, March 23**

Open Circle Unitarian Universalist Fellowship has scheduled its second session of The Equality Project for Thursday, March 23, 6-8 p.m. This month's program will examine laws and policies affecting the LGBTQ+ community in Fond du Lac County and the state.

The Equality Project is a monthly gathering to educate, support and take action to achieve equality for LGBTQ+ persons. All Fond du Lac residents who stand on the side of love are invited to attend the programs on the third Thursday of each month at the fellowship, 19 3rd St., in downtown Fond du Lac.

The evening will begin with a social gathering and refreshments at 6 p.m. Welcomes and introductions from local LGBTQ leaders will follow at 6:30 p.m., leading to a discussion of current local legal issues. The evening will wrap up at 8:30 p.m.

"This month, we will use information from the Human Rights Campaign, the largest LGBT civil rights advocacy group and political lobbying organization in the United States, to bring to light issues on housing, school, and public accommodation laws," said Christopher Szymczak, OCUUF member and UW-Fond du Lac student leader who developed The Equality Project programming with the Social Justice Now Committee at Open Circle. "Along with this, there will be a discussion of what we can do within our community to help make a difference in these laws and policies."

Like the local Humanity Project, with its goal of getting past race as a barrier, The Equality Project aims to remove gender and sexuality as barriers in understanding each other, and to improve relationships across the community.

"We have embraced radical hospitality," said Open Circle President Lisette Aldrich. "Open Circle is a welcoming and safe place for all folks, a sanctuary. This supports the core idea that first grabbed me in my religious education in my childhood: Love One Another."

Unitarian Universalists strongly believe in the inherent worth and dignity of every person, and the spiritual practice of welcome is a very important part of UU faith communities. For 25 years, congregations have worked hard to make sure lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer people are full members of UU faith communities. Being welcoming means striving for radical inclusion, and creating spaces that honor every part of individuals' identities, backgrounds, and experiences. Open Circle is an official UU Welcoming Congregation.

Future Equality Project evenings will examine a variety of topics, including civility and equality; religion; LGBTQ history, including social justice leaders, the Stonewall Riots, and Pride celebrations; protections for youth at school and in our community; days of remembrance such as Transgender Day of Remembrance and World Aids Day; LGBT families; and mental health.

Equality Project gatherings are next scheduled at Open Circle on April 27, May 25, and June 8. Open Circle Sunday services are at 10 a.m., September through June.

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