

## The Welcoming Process at Colts Neck Reformed Church, Colts Neck, NJ

March, 2016

In the fall of 2013, the ministers, consistory, and congregation of Colts Neck Reformed Church began a process to consider whether our church would become intentionally welcoming and affirming of people who are non-heteronormative, which is also summarized as LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender).

In the spring of 2014, the consistory and church staff engaged in a series of presentations and discussions led by the ministers. Similar sessions were then offered to the entire community at CNRC starting in the fall of 2014. A period of prayerful discernment followed, and two additional sessions were offered in the spring of 2015.

The sessions dealt with a variety of topics, including scripture, theology, tradition, church order, psychology and biology, and included lectures, presentations, table discussions, times for questions and answers, personal testimonies, and a panel discussion.

Through this process, the consistory of the Colts Neck Reformed Church has felt the Spirit's leading. Though we have been, for some time, a community that does welcome and affirm LGBT people, we feel the need to make that position heard more clearly. For that reason, we have adopted the following statement:

"The Colts Neck Reformed Church is committed to welcoming all people into the life of our church community. We commit to affirming the beauty, value, and gifts of all people. These commitments are not subject to a person's color, race, ethnicity, place of origin, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, relationship status (single, married, separated, divorced), socioeconomic situation, or a person's mental, physical or emotional health or ability. All people are welcome to participate fully in the life of our faith community. Membership is conditioned only upon a person's faith in Jesus Christ."