

Adopted by the Congregation 1/25/98, revised 1/23/11

## **An Open and Affirming Declaration**

We believe we are called to be a church that celebrates and shares a common communion and the assurance that all are created by God, reconciled by Christ, and empowered by the grace of the Holy Spirit.

We believe that people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions are children of God.

We believe that the few Biblical passages most often used to justify condemnation of homosexuality were not intended to address loving, faithful, and just relationships between two persons of the same sex and maturity. Jesus was silent on the issue, but his demonstrated ethic of inclusive love is the basis for our actions.

We believe that all persons need and are entitled to a safe place for spiritual growth and mutual ministry.

We know that people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender have been injured, ignored, or condemned by the Church in most times and places and thus do not feel welcome.

We know that the church suffers when our gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender sisters and brothers and their gifts are excluded.

Therefore, we openly welcome persons who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning into the life and ministry of Plymouth United Church of Christ and affirm them in the loving committed ways that they live out who they are.

In so doing, we also align ourselves with positions taken by the General Synod of the United Church of Christ, its Michigan Conference and other congregations of the United Church of Christ and declare that Plymouth United Church of Christ is an Open and Affirming Church.