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**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS STAND ON THE SIDE OF LOVE
WITH TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY**

**UU-Hosted Vigils, Services and Forums Scheduled Across the Country in
Commemoration of 12th International Transgender Day of Remembrance**

Boston, MA – Across the country, Unitarian Universalists and others who participate in our [Standing on the Side of Love](#) social justice campaign are commemorating the 12th International Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR) to remember and demand justice for transgender and gender variant individuals who were killed by acts of violence this year. The TDOR also focuses attention on prejudice and discrimination faced by gender non-conforming individuals. Unitarian Universalist Congregations all over the United States, in big cities and small towns, will host candlelight vigils, teach-ins, Sunday service readings, political actions, film screenings, and more.

“I am in awe this year at the public acknowledgment in love and compassion that UU Congregations across America are demonstrating by having a Transgender Day of Remembrance Vigils,” said Allison Woolbert, a New Jersey-based transgender advocate and gender educator. “When our community has suffered such devastating losses this year, and when the epidemic of violence has resulted in the murder of a sixteen month old little boy due to gender bias, it is Unitarian Universalists that come to our defense. I am greatly humbled and thankful to be a part of such an outstanding community that demonstrates it will stand on the side of love!”

Showing its deep commitment to honoring the inherent worth and dignity of all people, and putting faith into action, the UUA put out a call to its 25,000+ email list and its 22,000 Facebook followers urging individuals and congregations to commemorate TDOR at a time when the bullying and suicides of queer gay youth has overshadowed the murders and suicides of transgender individuals, some of them youth as well. UUA President Rev. Peter Morales released a statement (text in full, below), and a TDOR service was held this week at UUA headquarters.

Congregations in larger cities like Kansas City and Las Vegas will be joined by smaller fellowships in locales like Chelmsford, MA; Clearwater, FL; Bellaire, OH; Titusville, NJ; and Stroudsburg, PA in the Poconos in honoring the memory of those who have died this year as a result of gender intolerance by lighting candles and reading names. Many of these services are open and welcoming to the public.

The following is a brief description of some events that will take place:

- In San Luis Obispo, CA, Rev. Sean Parker Dennison will lead a service in a public park honoring those transgender people who have been the victims of hate crimes and transgender bias. Naomli Brennet, transgender singer- songwriter from Tucson, AZ will sing, and the event will be followed by an open house at the GALA Center hosted by Tranz Central Coast, a support group for trans people living on the Central Coast.
- On Saturday evening, Rev. Josh Pawelek of the UU Society of East, Manchester, CT, will commemorate the TDOR with many of his congregants at the State House in Hartford. Rev. Pawelek and State Rep. Mike Lawlor, who chairs the Judiciary Committee, will speak in favor of a transgender civil rights bill that will be introduced in January.
- At UUA headquarters on Beacon Hill in Boston, staff held a Chapel Service on Tuesday the 16th that featured a sermon, personal statements, readings, prayers, candle-lighting, and song.
- The Unitarian Universalist Church of Davis and the LGBT Resource Center of UC Davis and the are co-sponsoring a public, interfaith service for International Transgender Day of Remembrance. The event is open to the public, and will include speakers, silence, readings, a candlelight vigil, and an interfaith prayer and meditation. The memorial will also include a reading of the list of names of the more than 100 people murdered around the globe during the past year because of their gender expression or identity.
- The 2nd Annual Enid, OK observance of the International Transgender Day of Remembrance will be held November 20, 2010 at 8pm at The Center, the small, but important LGBTQ Community Center in Enid which provides a safe place for LGBTQ people and their parents, families, and friends. The event includes the reading of the names and lighting of candles of those lost as well as speakers and other readings. A film "Call Me Malcolm" may be played towards the end of the event for those wishing to watch. The Enid Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, CrossWalk United Church of Christ, and PFLAG Enid are the hosts of this event.

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Standing on the Side of Love is a public advocacy campaign that seeks to harness love's power to stop oppression. It is sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Association and all are welcomed to join.

STATEMENT FROM THE REV. PETER MORALES, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION, ON THE 12TH INTERNATIONAL TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

“Living authentically takes courage, strength, and above all, faith,” said Rev. Paul Langston-Daley, in an email last week to supporters of the Unitarian Universalist Association’s (UUA) Standing on the Side of Love campaign.

His words resonate with me, because they are at once encouraging, yet terribly sad.

Sad because as Unitarian Universalists and other people of faith commemorate the 12th Annual International Transgender Day of Remembrance, I am reminded that in a society still clinging to rigid ideas about gender, our brothers and sisters who are gender non-conforming risk their very lives just to honor their authentic selves.

Anti-transgender violence is a stunning epidemic, embodying the darkest aspects of human nature. Perpetrators of such violence have succumbed to the moral plagues of fear, hatred, and cruelty, turning away from love and compassion. Sadly, the victims of their murderous rage are too often forgotten by society at large. They leave behind friends, family, and an entire community who also feel targeted.

Despite this, I am encouraged. I hold fiercely to the belief that our society is becoming more compassionate and aware. Unitarian Universalists are joined by like-minded people every day who value the inherent dignity and worth of all. We have much work to do, and progress is slow, but I believe we will win this fight.

Unitarian Universalists have long dreamed of a society in which our most valued qualities are those of character. Now we must do more than dream.

As long as anyone is harassed or ridiculed, we must demand an end to the bullying. As long as anyone is judged because of their gender identification or presentation, we must insist on a higher moral standard. And if, God forbid, anyone is ever again physically harmed or murdered because of his or her gender identity or expression, we must rise up and seek justice.

We must put our faith into action, not just on this day of remembrance, but every day.

In memory of those who have been murdered, to all who feel their loss, and to all who still struggle with oppression, you are not alone. We are with you, standing on the side of love.