



HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN®

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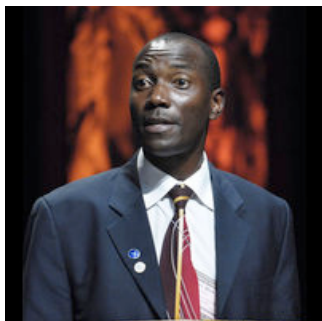
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Rev. Jay Leach, Sr. Minister, UU Church of Charlotte

## People of Faith Will Rally in Charlotte to Oppose Homophobia & Trans-phobia

*Local & International Clergy Join Together for June 24 Rally in Marshall Park*

Charlotte, N.C. – Interfaith community leaders will gather in Charlotte, N.C., on Friday, June 24, for a *Faith Community Rally Against Homophobia & Transphobia*. The faith rally is one of several across the state organized in response to an anti-LGBT amendment being considered by the North Carolina Legislature. Beginning at 4:30 p.m., several hundred people are planning to march on the sidewalks from the Charlotte Convention Center, where the Unitarian Universalist Association is holding its annual meeting, to gather for a 4:45 p.m. rally in Marshall Park that will feature local,



SPEAKER: Rev. Mark Kiyimba, founder of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Uganda, fled for the U.S. in March, fearing for his safety after becoming an outspoken opponent of proposed anti-gay legislation in his East African country.

national, and international clergy speaking out against proposed legislation that will marginalize and discriminate against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people.

“Locally, some faith leaders are using religious arguments that demean the inherent worth and dignity of gays and lesbians in an effort to promote writing discrimination into our state constitution,” said Rev. Jay Leach, Sr. Minister of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Charlotte. “This rally is an opportunity for us as religious leaders to demonstrate a climate of inclusion and acceptance for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals and their families. Our faith calls us to stand on the side of love with LGBT people, and honor the challenges they face, no matter where they live.”

## Participants will include:

- **Rev. Mark Kiyimba**, Founder, Unitarian Universalist Church of Uganda, an outspoken opponent of proposed legislation in his East African country dubbed the “Kill the Gays” bill
- **Rabbi Judy Schindler**, Temple Beth El, who has officiated same-gender weddings for nearly ten years
- **Ian Palmquist**, Exec. Dir., Equality North Carolina
- **Rev. Chris Ayers**, Wedgewood Baptist Church
- **Rev. Peter Morales**, President, Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
- **Loan Tran**, Youth Board Member, Time Out Youth
- **Rev. Robin Tanner**, Minister, Piedmont Unitarian Universalist Church
- **Rev. Jay Leach, Minister**, UU Church of Charlotte
- **Bishop Tonyia M. Rawls**, Unity Fellowship Church

Co-sponsors of the rally (as of June 6) include Time Out Youth, the Unitarian Universalist Association’s “Standing on the Side of Love” campaign, the Human Rights Campaign, and Equality North Carolina, whose North Carolina Religious Coalition for Marriage Equality is circulating a Declaration of Religious Leaders & People of Faith. (View it here: <http://www.equalitync.org/faith>)

“Love is about embracing all people in our communities,” said Rev. Chris Ayers of Wedgewood Baptist Church. “As faith leaders, we have a moral responsibility to remind people that love knows no border, no gender, no race, and no religion.”

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### **About the Standing on the Side of Love campaign:**

Sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Association, this public advocacy campaign elevates compassionate religious voices to influence public attitudes and public policy. The campaign was inspired by Unitarian Universalist work for marriage equality in Massachusetts and California. It was formed as a national movement following the 2008 shooting at Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church, which was targeted because they are welcoming to LGBT people and have a liberal stance on many issues. The Knoxville Community responded with an outpouring of love that inspired the leadership at the Unitarian Universalist Association to launch a campaign that would harness love’s power to challenging exclusion, oppression and violence based on sexual orientation, gender identity, immigration status, race, religion, or any other identity. For more information, visit [www.standingonthesideoflove.org](http://www.standingonthesideoflove.org).

### **About Equality North Carolina:**

Equality NC is a statewide group dedicated to securing equal rights and justice for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people. We work toward that goal by effectively lobbying the North Carolina General Assembly, executive branch, and local governments on issues like inclusive anti-bullying policies, employment discrimination, hate violence, privacy rights, sexuality education, adoption, domestic partnership, HIV/AIDS, and more. We also work to engage North Carolinians with educational programming and outreach efforts. For more information, visit

[www.equalitync.org](http://www.equalitync.org).

**About Time Out Youth:**

Time Out Youth offers support, advocacy, and opportunities for personal development and social interaction to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth ages 13 – 23. For more information, visit [www.timeoutyouth.org](http://www.timeoutyouth.org).

**About Faith in America:**

Faith In America was formed as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational organization in 2005 to effectively counter-message the bigotry, prejudice and hostility toward the LGBT community being sold to the public for several decades under the guise of religious belief and religious teaching. Faith In America is working in schools, churches, state legislatures, the halls of Congress and with the media to educate mainstream America about the immense harm brought to bear on gay Americans, particularly gay youth. Our organization is not a religious organization. It does not take a theologian or religious background to understand that religion-based bigotry and prejudice brings condemnation, discrimination and violence to bear on its victims.

For more information, visit <http://www.faithinamerica.org>.

**About the Human Rights Campaign:**

The Human Rights Campaign represents a force of more than one million members and supporters nationwide. As the largest national lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender civil rights organization, HRC envisions an America where LGBT people are ensured of their basic equal rights, and can be open, honest and safe at home, at work and in the community. For more information, visit <http://www.hrc.org>.