

April 20, 2009

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

After a year and a half of study and prayer, the Open and Affirming (ONA) Committee of the Rocky Hill Congregational Church has completed its charge from the Diaconate. Thus, a period of discernment about what it means to be an Open and Affirming Church has come to a close.

The Committee submitted its final report to the Diaconate at its meeting on April 7. The report, a copy of which is included with this letter, contains a 3-part recommendation. The report was unanimously approved by the Diaconate and unanimously affirmed by the Council at their April meetings. The ONA Committee has been disbanded with expressions of gratitude from both the Diaconate and the Council for the difficult and faithful work the committee has undertaken over the past two years.

The ONA Committee's first recommendation is that a vote be taken regarding whether or not Rocky Hill Congregational Church should become an Open and Affirming church. In order to clarify the meaning of such a vote, the Committee drafted a public statement of position, which was also adopted unanimously by the Diaconate and affirmed unanimously by the Council. A copy of the statement upon which the vote will be taken is also enclosed.

The Council has set June 7 as the date for the vote, which will be taken by paper ballot. Per our constitution, only members who are present at that meeting are eligible to vote. Prior to the vote, there will be two conversation sessions hosted by the Council. The dates are May 3 and May 31, both following worship.

The Committee's website and lending library will continue to be available for anyone who would like to do further self-study prior to the conversations and the vote. The May Church Mouse will contain a complete list of all the resources available.

We look forward to our final prayerful decision together on June 7 regarding our open and affirming status.

In faithful service

Ruth Fitzgerald

Deb Copes

Gail Hall

For:

Council

Diaconate

ONA Committee