

Hello Discussion Group,

Thank you, for sending us this ongoing discussion. I liked our last Town Hall Meeting very much. We all had a chance to share our ideas, to be listened to, and to take the time to truly hear each other. I agree that we need to have those more often. I also like this format for sharing ideas, and I enjoyed your letters very much.

I like "taking a stand" when it seems important and clear that most of us agree on an issue. When we don't agree as strongly on an issue, I like meetings like the last Town Hall Meeting. And I think many political issues are also moral issues.

I used to march regularly in the Gay Pride Parade with our church group; I helped carry a sign that said we were from Niles Congregational United Church of Christ; and we were there officially representing the congregation. My first year in the parade as we marched together, Mary Conant told me to watch the faces of the men watching the parade. She said they are staring at you because you have grey hair and you represent the church. She said many of them have mothers and/or grandmothers who no longer speak to them because they are gay, and they are from a church that says they are sinners for being who they are. By being here, you are saying that they are okay, that God loves them, and that there are churches who would welcome them. I like giving that message by my actions. I think peaceful demonstrations are valuable.

I also think there is room for different opinions. I learn from the church members who feel differently than I do. I appreciate talking with people who have different ideas and can talk and listen rationally and reasonably. I may not change my mind, but I usually go away from the talk understanding them better than I did before our communications.

Thanks again for sharing these letters/essays.

Peace and Love to all of you,  
Marilyn Rasler