

Family.

Family values. Christian values. Marriage, parenting, adoption, orientation, identity, family structure and so forth are among those topics central to heated conversations within faith communities, especially as standing ideas find themselves increasingly strained by a changing world.

And in keeping with my brothers and sisters from other faith communities, I want you to know what you might expect from me, and by extension from Unity in Lynnwood, on such matters.

If your life is somehow touched by the intersection of spirituality and LGBTQ issues, here's what I invite you to consider: the Judeo-Christian Bible has never condemned you. The so-called "clear teachings of the Bible" on LGBTQ issues are found in no more than nine references - nine references found within 66 books written over 1,000 years - the most cited being those found in Genesis and Leviticus, and virtually all of which address matters of violence, rape, abuse or tribal identity; not matters of orientation, identity, sex or family structure.

I would suggest that the Judeo-Christian collection of writings has long been misunderstood, misconstrued and misinterpreted; twisted, distorted and weaponized to sanction humanity's lowest impulses and deepest prejudices against those of certain religions, against those of certain geographies, against those of certain genders, against those of certain colors, against those of certain classes and yes, against those of certain orientations and identities for centuries.

I always find it particularly worthy to note that of the many beautiful teachings recorded and ascribed to Jesus himself, any addressing LGBTQ issues are not to be found among them.

In the end, as an evolving people have appropriately rejected those passages seeming to support atrocities such as slavery, sexism, murder, infanticide and the like from those considered to be universally relevant, it is time to reject those passages seeming to support anti-LGBTQ sentiments from those considered to be universally relevant as well.

We, at Unity in Lynnwood, seek to identify and practice those universally relevant themes of the Judeo-Christian library – themes of inclusion, acceptance, change, healing, creativity, forgiveness and love of God, self and other.

So, to be clear, you are welcome at Unity in Lynnwood - a diverse community in which you will be invited into conversations about the depth of your love, not the form of your love; a diverse community in which you won't be met with the low bar of tolerance but with the high standard of celebration, just as you are.