



Center for Lesbian
and Gay Studies



Resource Kit for Decision Day

For more info, contact
Kerry Chaplin 310-598-5866

Dear Faith Leaders:

We hope you find the attached Resource Kit useful as you plan your event(s) for Decision Day. This Kit includes materials for faith leaders and communities to minister to our LGBT community in this time of emotional tumult and to let California and the nation know that people of faith support the freedom to marry. As appropriate, please make sure faith leaders are visible and are wearing identifiable attire during these events as symbols of that message and of non-violent action.

There are three main resources in the Kit.

- (1) Pledge by faith leader/clergy/congregation (depending on polity) to continue the fight for marriage equality.** We recommend that this be “blown up” at a local copy store, mounted on foam core, and read and signed publicly by diverse faith leaders at the Decision Day rally/vigil/event, during the Interfaith Service (see item 2 below), or by fellow congregants at your regular worship service following Decision Day. The pledge could also become a “traveling document” that could be signed by other faith leaders in your county/community. The end “product” could then be framed and posted at each congregation as a reminder of your congregation’s commitment to working towards marriage equality for all Californians.
If you do plan to use the statement, please let us know so that we can rightfully claim that it is being used in a large number of faith communities in every county of California. Email Kerry at kerry@cafaithforequality.org.
- (2) Interfaith Service.** An opportunity to provide spiritual care to the community, this event could be as elaborate or as simple as you’d like it to be, depending on the resources available in your community. Some services will have large choirs, with multiple faith leaders officiating, while others will have a cappella singing and one or two leaders officiating. In order to create visibility for the service, you might consider following the service with a candlelight vigil outside the venue. If you’d like support for media outreach for your local service, please email CA Faith for Equality’s Media Coordinator, Louise Brooks, at louise@cafaithforequality.org.
- (3) Talking Concepts.** Your stories are important, so please use these concepts as a springboard to talk about resiliency, hope and faith! If you would like assistance in planning a clergy press conference or in writing an op-ed, please e-mail CA Faith for Equality’s Media Coordinator, Louise Brooks, at louise@cafaithforequality.org.

If you are searching for like-minded faith leaders or secular marriage equality organizers in your region, we can connect you, so please do not hesitate to ask Jonipher at jonipher@cafaithforequality.org or Kerry at kerry@cafaithforequality.org. If you would like more info on Decision Day, go to www.equalitycentral.org/dayofdecision. Thank you for your prophetic commitment to equality.

In Blessed Hope,
California Faith for Equality Staff



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Decision Day Pledge

As people of faith, we reaffirm our belief in the sacred worth and dignity of every human being. We know that some individuals choose to enter into loving, committed, covenantal relationships with another individual. We, as a community of faith, bless these covenants as marriages, inclusive of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.

When marriages for same-sex couples became legal last summer in the state of California, we and many other faith communities commemorated these unions as communal celebrations. When the passage of Proposition 8 eliminated the right of same-sex couples to marry on November 4, 2008, we were sad, angry, and disappointed that the marriages we had just celebrated were called into question, and that thousands of others would be robbed of the freedom to marry.

Disappointment was turned into a zeal for justice, however, as California Faith for Equality, the California Council of Churches, and close to one thousand individuals, congregations and religious organizations signed an Interfaith Amicus Brief to repeal Proposition 8 and to protect our religious freedom to marry same-sex couples according to our beliefs. On the night before the California Supreme Court heard oral arguments, on our "Eve of Justice," people of faith left the pews to pray with our feet that the Supreme Court do the right thing.

(Assumption is that the 18,000 marriages will be upheld) Today, we applaud the Court's decision to uphold the 18,000 marriages for same-sex couples performed last summer.

Case #1 *(Best case – Prop 8 is overturned and ruled as a revision, not an amendment)*

We also affirm the ruling that the rights of the minority should be protected from the tyranny of the slight majority. We commend the courage of the justices to ensure that gays and lesbians be protected by our Constitution as a group of Californians who face discrimination. We commit to a reconciliation process based on spiritual principles of mutual respect and love with those religious bodies and people that may not agree with this position. We also commit to educating our own faith communities on the importance of marriage equality and treating all members of our community with compassion.

Case #2 *(Prop 8 is upheld, but court rules government should stay out of the marrying business, granting only licenses through civil unions or similar phrase that is different from marriage for both same-sex and opposite-sex couples)*

We also affirm the decision to clearly distinguish church from state by offering all couples the same rights and responsibilities, regardless of gender or sexual orientation. Civil unions *(or whatever phrase is used)* will ensure the same legal protections for all families, while allowing for couples to be married through a religious body should they choose to do so and should that religion support that marriage. However, we still denounce the discriminatory language that is allowed to stay in the State Constitution as harmful to the emotional, psychological, and spiritual well-being of gay and lesbian families, and all Californians. We call for the elimination of article 1.7.5, which limits marriage to opposite-sex couples.

Case #3 *(Prop 8 is upheld, stripping marriage rights for same-sex couples)*

However, we denounce the discriminatory language that is allowed to stay in the State Constitution as harmful to the emotional, psychological, and spiritual well-being of gay and lesbian families, and all Californians. We call for the elimination of article 1.7.5, which limits marriage to opposite-sex couples. We pray for a peaceful solution that will ensure equality and justice for all. We commit to the continuing education of Californians about marriage equality and offer emotional and spiritual support to gays and lesbians, who have suffered a temporary loss. We believe in the human capacity for resiliency, and the healing that community can offer. May peace begin with each and every single one of us.

As we work toward a country that values all its citizens, and a world where human diversity is celebrated, may we continue to take seriously our call to justice by speaking our truth to power. May we continue to practice compassion by always standing on the side of love.



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Interfaith Service for Decision Day

Designed by AJ Blackwood and the Orange County Equality Coalition Interfaith Committee

Gathering Music

(instrumental or familiar songs, like "True Colors" by Cindi Lauper, etc.)

Welcome

Venue Host, Coalition Chair, Event Planner, or Service Presider

Call to Worship (may be responsive)

By William F. Schulz

Come into this place of peace
and let its silence heal your spirit;
Come into this place of memory
and let its history warm your soul;
Come into this place of prophecy and power
and let its vision change your heart

Opening Song

(Suggestions: "We've Come This Far By Faith," "We are Standing on the Side of Love,"
"Lean on Me," "We are a Gentle, Angry People")

Story Teller 1

Queer Couple

Sacred Silence

Story Teller 2

Straight Ally

Musical Response/Anthem

Story Teller 3

Youth/Young Adult

Meditation/Interpretive/Liturgical Dance

Clergy Pledge

Read Pledge from California Faith for Equality and have each service leader sign

Theological/philosophical/historical explanation for support of marriage equality from each tradition:

(Not necessarily in this order and depends on who you have in your community)
Christian, Unitarian Universalist, Jewish, Buddhist, Indigenous Tradition/Spirituality, Humanist, etc.

Offering

(Pledge card stating support for marriage equality and continued education, financial donations may also be taken to support a local group or groups supporting marriage equality work)

Musical Interlude

Commissioning

(a charismatic faith leader should do this to get the crowd riled up)

Sing Out, March Out

(Suggestions: "This Little Light of Mine," "Forward through the Ages," "We'll Build a Land")



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Talking Concepts

While we wait for the Decision:

We say together a pledge of allegiance that promises “liberty and justice for all” – not for some. ALL relationships and families deserve equal protection and equal rights under the law – not just some.

We know that the arc of history bends towards justice. We believe we are on the right side of history on the issue of marriage equality, justice delayed is justice denied.

Vermont, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Iowa have all affirmed that equal protection means equal access for both same and opposite sex couples to both the rights and responsibilities of civil marriage. We call on the California Court to step up and offer its citizens the same protections.

As people of faith, we respect those whose faith traditions differ from ours on the issue of same sex marriage. However, we cannot stand by and let a well-funded percentage of religious voices write their theology into our constitution by taking away the right to civil marriage from same-sex couples in California.

If the Decision goes against us:

We know that the arc of history bends towards justice and while justice was today delayed by the decision of the Supreme Court we know that it will not be denied.

We *are* on the right side of history on the issue of marriage equality and we recommit ourselves today to continue the struggle until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like an ever flowing stream.

As people of faith, we respect those whose faith traditions differ from ours on the issue of same sex marriage. However, we cannot stand by and let a well-funded percentage of religious voices write their theology into our constitution by taking away the right to civil marriage from same-sex couples in California.

As faith leaders, we are here today to say that bigotry, exclusion and discrimination are NOT faith based family values and that we are committed to stand together for equality for *all* Californians – no matter how long it takes.

If the Decision goes for us:

Our faith traditions teach that we are all equally beloved by God – and today we celebrate that Californians who seek to commit to each other are equally protected by the rights and responsibilities of marriage.

As people of faith, we respect those whose faith traditions differ from ours on the issue of same sex marriage. We invite them now to stand with us and to put aside the rancor that has divided us during this long and difficult campaign as we work together to make a better California for ALL families.

California now joins Iowa, Vermont, Massachusetts and Connecticut as states where “liberty and justice for all” really means “all” when it comes to marriage equality. As people of faith, we pray God’s blessing on ALL married couples – and give thanks for the decision that affirms the equal dignity of same sex couples.

As people of faith, we pray that the witness of our relationships will continue to change hearts and minds and to heal the wounds that have divided us on the issue of marriage equality. It is time now to focus on the values that make up a family – not the gender of the couple – and work together to build a better California.