

Eden United Church of Christ

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Minister Speaks Out for Gay Inclusion in Anti-Bullying and Safe Schools, and Diversity Education Programs

Remarks supported by congregation and local interfaith groups

Castro Valley, California – March 11, 2010 – Today the Rev. Dr. Arlene K. Nehring, Senior Minister of Eden United Church of Christ, participated in the “Days of Diversity” program at Castro Valley High School for the fourth consecutive year, presenting her talk, “Out for Good” about her experience of being a pastor who happens to be lesbian, and about significant events in the struggle for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender equality.

Rev. Nehring said, “I was pleased to return to Castro Valley High and grateful for the support of my congregation and the local interfaith community for the inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) life experience in diversity education, and anti-bullying and safe schools programs, like Days of Diversity.”

Rev. Nehring, who previewed her presentation for the press last Friday, explained that during her remarks she distributed a glossary used by sociologists to describe LGBT persons, shared highlights and photos of her life journey, and provided a thumbnail sketch of recent events in LGBT history. Students were invited to ask questions during the presentation and, anonymously, at its end.

“The kids were fabulous, and asked interesting and thoughtful questions,” said Rev. Nehring. “I’ve been participating in this program for four years now, and see growth each year in students’ awareness of issues that affect the gay community. I have also noticed a modest reduction in the amount of homophobic bullying that students have described at their school. I believe that these changes are the result of school leaders’ commitment to diversity education, anti-bullying, and safe schools programs that include the experience of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons and families.”

Rev. Nehring said, “As a pastor, I have been very impressed with my congregation’s support for diversity education, anti-bullying, and safe schools programs. Our recent ‘Love Makes a Family’ photo exhibit and celebration was held at the church last weekend. And I want to thank members of the interfaith community in the East Bay for their support of our efforts, particularly Ruth Hartman and Congregation Shir Ami of Castro Valley, United Church of Christ officials, and the many local Christian congregations who were part of our public witness.”

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