

Dear Beloveds,

I am excited to experience The Episcopal Diocese of Utah showing up in love and support at this year's PRIDE events. Salt Lake City's events are scheduled for the first weekend of June, but activities will continue throughout the month around the state. I encourage you to find the events closest to you, especially ecumenical worship services!

How and why is it important for Episcopalians to show up at Pride events and worship services? Why should we make a special effort to be visible and to have booths with information about our churches and our missions and ministries?

First and foremost, we show up as representatives of God's love for all people. You never know who might be behind you in the parade and read your t-shirt that says, "God Loves All" and in that minute realize that God is speaking to them. As Episcopalians, we believe in a loving God who sent his Son so that all might be brought into the fold of God. We believe as disciples of Jesus, it is our work to seek the lost and alienated bringing the Gospel message of healing and reconciliation to all people.

To do this, we need to show up.

And once there, we need to get to know people, ask about their experiences and concerns. Generally said, we need to get to know our neighbors. There is a lot to experience at PRIDE, but one of the most interesting observations is to see how people express their joy when they feel free and safe to be seen. I always leave PRIDE days wondering, how can the church create safe and inviting spaces for people to show up as they are? What spiritual transformation is needed for us to truly love and see people as the glorious and diverse creations of God that they are? What spiritual courage does it take for us to each show up as our own authentically created self?

As always, whenever we step out to the margins to encounter those different from ourselves, we are blessed with the opportunity to encounter ourselves, parts known and unknown to us.

May PRIDE month be an opportunity to share the love of Jesus – with your neighbor and with yourself.

Blessings to all,

+Bp. Phyllis Spiegel