



WHY?

At UUCSS, 624 North Broadway, our restrooms have always been gender neutral, so why have we changed the language on the doors from "Restroom" to "All-Gender Restroom"?

As a step toward being a Welcoming Congregation, restrooms are now labeled for use by all genders. For transgender, gender non-conforming, and non-binary people, the use of public restrooms can come with emotional and physical harassment, deep discomfort, risk of arrest for being in the "wrong" bathroom or even physical violence and death.

To be merely neutral isn't what we at UUCSS aspire to. We know ours is the greater aspiration of intentional welcome. This means challenging ourselves to think outside the boxes which can be easy to take for granted. Examining our space and surroundings, our symbols, our signs, our language, our speech, can only make us a more welcoming place.

One thing we can assume is that every day can be a day someone first enters our building, stepping through the doors of UUCSS from an outside world where they may have felt profoundly unwelcome. How might they feel to find a sign that clearly indicates they need not have such fears here? To see a sign that clearly communicates: You are welcome here? You are safe here?

Let's be encouraged to thoughtfully examine and challenge our assumptions around gender identity and gender expression. We invite compassionate and ongoing dialogue around these issues as part of our work toward right relationship. Toward that end, we will be offering many more opportunities:

Remember the awesome Trans Talks Forum at the library in May? There is more in store:

- November 19, Transgender Day of Remembrance Observance, 4pm Skidmore Campus
- December 3, Acknowledgment of National Weekend of Prayer for LGBTQ Justice
- January 2018, Gender Identity workshop with Acey Mercer, Saratoga Springs
- March 2018, Transgender Day of Visibility - *The day is dedicated to celebrating the accomplishments and victories of transgender [and] gender non-conforming people while raising awareness of the work that is still needed to save trans lives*

The Welcoming Congregation Team is all of us, *including you!* Please ask questions, look at our space through a welcoming lens and suggest improvements, not only attend educational opportunities brought to you, but help us shape them.

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