

## **Letter to the Editor – Brainerd Dispatch**

I was deeply distressed to read the recent Clergy View column “A Sanctuary State for Evil.” Such rhetoric about gay, lesbian, non-binary, and transgender persons fuels violence against such persons that is already rampant across this country and does incredible harm to LGBTQ individuals and their families. Further, using the Christian faith to somehow substantiate such hate-filled claims is dangerous and false.

The Christian Gospels provides ample evidence that the way of Jesus was one of inclusive love. He intentionally welcomed those who others in that culture & time typically hated & excluded, including women, the poor, and the sick. His example of love became his command to those who would claim him as their Messiah & Teacher. Indeed, scriptures tell us that on the same night when Jesus stooped to wash his disciples’ feet in an act of humble service, he said, “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples...” (John 13:34-35)

In the United Church of Christ, we know that the love of Christ we’re commanded to share extends to all our neighbors, including our LGBTQ siblings. We celebrate their gifts in our pulpits and in our pews, & see within them the beautiful image of God. As we walk the path of this blessed Holy Week, I pray all people of faith will heed Christ’s call to be known by our love.

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