

Blessings of Glitter, Drag, Gender Play and Joy

Unitarian Universalist Church of Vancouver

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Reflection on the Theme – Lacey Stokes

My first experience with a mom of a trans teen was a woman named Meg, who joined our homeschool co-op with her trans son Emerson. Emerson was an amazing kid. His deadpan humor was a riot, he was an incredibly talented cosplayer and costume maker and his love for animals led him to a career of caring for them. The fact that he was trans was inconsequential. He was just a cool kid; one I enjoyed having in my home and being involved with.

But I will never forget the night I stayed up all night with Meg so she could stay awake to make sure that amazing young man made it through the night. Because unfortunately, to a large part of the world, the fact that Em was trans mattered very much. He was only seventeen and already feeling the weight of a society that didn't just not accept him for who he was but despised him for his very existence.

When my own daughter came out as trans a couple years later, I had a huge mix of emotions. I was so incredibly proud of her, of her courage and bravery to be her whole, authentic self. I was also terrified because she was stepping into a world that I knew would do its best to hurt her. The statistics on the suicide rate of trans teens is staggering and when you are the parent of a trans teen, those numbers hit like a shot to the heart.

But while the number of suicides in trans teens is indeed so high, there's a way to cut that number in half. In half! You know what it is? Use the child's preferred pronouns at home. That's it. It's the very base level of respect and compassion but it makes a monumental difference in the lives of these teens.

When my second child came out as non-binary and asked for everyone to use they/them pronouns, we quickly obliged, again, with feelings of pride and fear intermixed.

Can I tell you that the fear I felt then, when my children were teens, is nothing to the fear I feel for them as trans adults in this political climate. It is ever present. It is strangling. While people argue about which bathroom my children should be allowed to use and whether or not they should be able to play sports... I'm seeing a much more insidious power play at work. I'm seeing both the right and the left choosing trans people as a disposable people.

Our theme this month centers on compassion and my hope and my prayer is that we as a nation can move into seeing trans people as they are. As people. As human beings with inherent worth and dignity and the right to live as their whole selves. And that starts on an individual level. It starts with using the correct pronouns. It starts with standing up to micro-aggressions and refusing to use them yourself. It starts with me and it starts with you.

There is so much hate constantly levied at this community of people. We can choose compassion, and we can choose to change that tide with love.