

Friday Night Shabbat Services
Rabbi Dara Frimmer
June 9, 2023

The vibrant month of June is a time of celebration and reflection for the LGBTQ+ community. Temple Isaiah believes in the inherent value of every individual, recognizing the importance of diversity and inclusion within our community. Our tradition teaches us that every person is created “B’tzelem Elohim,” in the image of the Divine, a notion that highlights the intrinsic worth of each human being. We embrace the beauty of our LGBTQ+ members and recognize their unique contributions in our community.

At the same time, LGBTQ+ communities face ongoing legal and cultural bigotry and discrimination.

Transphobia, a particular target of hate and political fuel, especially now, impacts all parts of life.

75 percent of transgender students feel unsafe in their school and often experience physical, verbal, and sexual abuse. Oftentimes, this results in youth being kicked out of or running away from home. Around 37 percent of homeless youth identify as LGBTQ+. Transgender adults face discrimination in many places, including employment, health care, and social services. Trans People of Color, often experience disproportionately high rates of violence.

Our Reform Jewish community has made great efforts to be more inclusive toward the gay, lesbian, and bisexual communities, but there is still more work to be done to make our Movement and our society fully inclusive of transgender and gender-expansive people. I am grateful to our staff and lay leaders who are currently exploring pathways towards greater inclusion at Temple Isaiah.

Tonight, we offer a blessing for our trans-community members, loved ones, friends and family written by Rabbi Reuben Zellman, called Twilight People:

As the sun sinks and the colors of the day turn, we offer a blessing for the twilight, for twilight is neither day nor night, but in-between. We are all twilight people. We can never be fully labeled or defined. We are many identities and loves, many genders and none. We are in between roles, at the intersection of histories, or between place and place. We are criss crossed paths of memory and destination, streaks of light and swirled together. We are neither day nor night. We are both, neither, and all.

May the sacred in-between of this evening suspend our certainties, soften our judgments, and widen our vision. May this in-between light illuminate our way to the God who transcends all categories and definitions. May the in-between people who have come to pray be lifted up into this twilight. We cannot always define; we can always say a blessing. Blessed are You, God of all, who brings on the twilight.