

Tapestry,
A Unitarian Universalist Congregation
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Mission Viejo Ministers Fly to Massachusetts
to Wed on National Coming Out Day**

The Rev. John Millspaugh, 32, and the Rev. Sarah Gibb, 32, flew from Mission Viejo, California to Boston, Massachusetts to wed on Wednesday, October 11. They traveled to the East Coast “to wed in a state that recognizes the rights of all loving, committed couples to marry, regardless of sexual orientation,” according to Gibb.

“We chose not to marry in California because this state denies marriage to gay and lesbian couples whose love is as deep and sacred as our own,” added Millspaugh. “We’re committing to each other in a state that makes a principled commitment to all of its citizens.”

When they scheduled their civil ceremony, the clergy couple did not realize the significance of the date. October 11 is “National Coming Out Day,” commemorating a 1987 march when 500,000 people marched on Washington D.C. for gay and lesbian equality.

“The coincidental date fits with our reasons for holding the ceremony in Massachusetts,” Millspaugh stated. “Both Sarah and I feel moral discomfort with receiving social and legal benefits of marriage when they are denied to our peers. Wedding in Massachusetts instead of California is a symbolic act, but we think an important witness in this society that denies one class of citizens their full humanity.”

Both ministers serve Tapestry, a Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Mission Viejo that “affirms and promotes the inherent dignity and worth of every person.” Millspaugh said, “I know I speak for my congregation when I say that as people of faith we remain committed to continued engagement in the struggle for marriage equality, until the day when full legal and civic equality is a reality for all loving couples.”

The decision has stirred some negative reaction. An anonymous caller to the congregation informed Millspaugh that he will “go to hell” for supporting gay and lesbian people. “But John’s commitment to justice is part of what I love about him,” noted Sarah.

Work for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender rights has a long history in Unitarian Universalism, though the denomination is predominately heterosexual. In California, the denomination’s clergy have performed services of union for same-sex couples since 1970s. The denomination is on record in favor of marriage equality. In Massachusetts’ landmark *Goodridge v. Dept. of Public Health*, 798 N.E.2d 941 (Mass. 2003) case, which established marriage equality in that state, seven of the fourteen plaintiffs were Unitarian Universalists.

The couple signed their Certificate of Marriage in a private ceremony in the chapel of the Unitarian Universalist Association, next to the Massachusetts State House. Their religious ceremony will occur on October 29 in San Diego County, where the groom’s parents reside.