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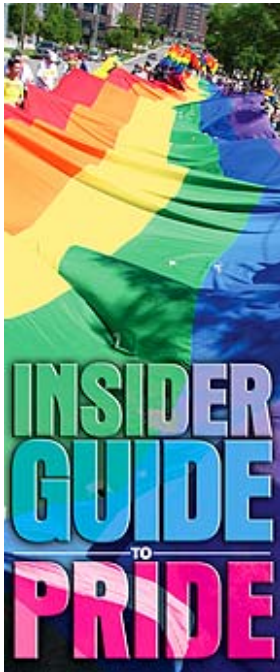
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# Feature



## Insider Guide to Utah Pride

### SATURDAY

#### Pride Interfaith Celebration

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For years now, queers and their supporters across America have communed once a year in celebrations widely referred to as "Pride." A veritable gay holiday, there have always been present the elements of diversity, self-respect, and of battles fought, lost and won. But as we hold up our flags as the symbol of diversity, what has happened to the element of spirituality? The answer to that question is being answered, in part, by members of the Pride Interfaith Council, a collection of affirming local religious and spiritual organizations that have banded together and formed the Pride Interfaith Celebration, which takes place this year on June 11 at the First Baptist Church in Salt Lake.

What started out four years ago as an unofficial sidecar to other Pride festivities has ballooned into an event large enough in both participation and esteem that it has, for the first year ever, been made an official event of Utah Pride. The council has grown to include different groups that run the gamut of religion and spirituality, including organized Christian religions, Buddhism, Judaism and Paganism, to mention a few.

"We felt that Pride didn't represent all aspects of life, that with gay pride we should celebrate all aspects, including spirituality," says Interfaith Committee Chair Duane Jennings, who has a wide-ranging background of involvement with various local and national religious leaders.

While many mainstream churches and religions may be loathe embracing the acceptance of queer people, or content to remain neutral on the subject of homosexuality, it is the goal of the Interfaith Pride Council to focus on the fact that the basic concepts of religion are the same, centering on trying to be the best person you can be. The idea that all people come from different beliefs and religious backgrounds

### INSIDER GUIDE TO PRIDE

THURSDAY-SATURDAY

- [Damn These Heels Film Festival](#)

FRIDAY

- [Grand Marshal Reception](#)

SATURDAY

- [Pride Interfaith Celebration](#)
- [Dyke March](#)
- [Beverages](#)

SUNDAY

- [5K Run/Walk/Roll](#)
- [Utah Pride Parade](#)
- [Sumo Smackdown](#)
- [On-Stage Entertainment](#)



is central, and that by using those differences to bring the community together, coming out of the closet doesn't have to equate supporting themselves solo in terms of spirituality. All of the involved members are affirming and welcoming of queer people, whether they are ancillary queer-based religious support groups, traditionally tolerant spiritual organizations, or congregations progressive in their nature, allowing their members to seek dialogue concerning issues such as same gender unions or advancement within church clergy.

The participants of this year's Pride Interfaith Celebration will include Integrity Utah, Affirmation: Gay & Lesbian Mormons, South Valley Unitarian Universalist Society, the Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans, Congregation Kol Ami, Sacred Light of Christ Metropolitan Community Church, Family Fellowship, Gamofites, Wasatch Presbyterian, LDS Reconciliation, the Unitarian Universalist Church of Ogden, Holladay United Church of Christ, the Restoration Church of Christ, and the Wasatch Zen Center, including other unaffiliated faith groups within the valley.

Each year's celebration is held at different locations of the various participants, keeping in line the differences that bring the collective faiths together. This year it will be held at the First Baptist Church, located at 777 South 1300 East in Salt Lake City, with free admission at 6pm. The theme of the celebration will be "Holy People—Equal Rites," a theme that parallels the idea of diversity and the theme of Utah Pride 2005, "Equal Rights. No More. No Less." The service will last about an hour and will include aspects and elements respectful of the varying religions and spiritual groups coming together. Also performing in the service will be the Salt Lake Men's Choir, the Dark Moon Drummers Guild, PFLAG-SLC, and others, including individuals from The Center. After the service, those attending are invited to a social hour for refreshments and a chance to mingle with participants and learn more about affirming religious and spiritual organizations within the area.

With both an increasing attendance and participation, as well as become an official venue of Pride, Jennings concludes this year's Interfaith Pride Celebration will be "a celebration of song and word, a renewal of the desire and commitment to create a better world where all people are recognized, included, and celebrated."

