

Chalice Lighting

(Sung)

*“Willkommen, bienvenue, welcome
Fremde, etranger, stranger
Glücklich zu sehen, je suis enchante,
Happy to see you, bleibe, reste, stay”*

(Spoken)

You knew I had to get some musical theatre in this, right? From the 1966 Kander and Ebb musical, “Cabaret,” this song opens the show. It is sung by the androgynous and decadent Emcee. Set in 1931 Berlin, the musical’s opening number proves a lie as characters are drawn into the rapid maelstrom of the Nazis’ rise to power. There is no longer any welcome for those whose religion or sexual preference don’t fit into the plans of that repressive regime.

Yet, we’ve come a long way, right? Both since defeating the threat of Hitler’s Germany in World War II as well as the socially turbulent 1960’s when “Cabaret” was first on Broadway. Or have we? This past Friday’s *Lowell Sun* “Backtalk” section included a Dracut resident’s opinion that one of the Presidential candidates (I’ll let you guess which one) had an “agenda” to approve a “Gay Bill of Rights.”

As a Welcoming Congregation, we have both a duty to welcome and celebrate differences within our congregation, but also to be an advocate and ally for the LGBTQ community *outside* our church walls. I light the chalice today in honor of our continued commitment to, as our website states, welcome the presence and unique gifts of all, but also to speak out when the rights and dignity of gay, bisexual, lesbian and transgender people are at stake.

I close with 2013's "Kinky Boots," the Cyndi Lauper musical that ends on a note of triumphal hope for all of us.

(Sung)

"Just be.

Who you wanna be.

Never let 'em tell you who you ought to be

Just be. With dignity.

Celebrate yourself triumphantly"