

I am Rev Dr Joelle Henneman, my pronouns are she/her, I am a transgender woman and the senior pastor of the United Methodist Church for All People. I speak in opposition to HB 8.

As a person born in 1967, I grew up in a time when words like queer were used as a weapon to harm, words like transgender did not exist so people like me went unseen, and fear of HIV/AIDS was used to vilify gay people.

As a result of growing up in this climate, I developed a sense of shame for who I am and have dealt with depression, anxiety, and suicide ideation for all of my life.

HB 8 will result in vulnerable youth experiencing the same things I did decades ago, not feeling safe to understand who they are in their gender and orientation. Like me, many youth live in households that are not safe or affirming. "Outing" these youth to their parents will increase already disproportionately high rates of depression, anxiety, and suicidality among LGBT youth.

The primary role of government is to protect rights and ensure safety. Vote no on HB 8 and protect LGBT youth, some of the most vulnerable people in our communities today.

Pastor Joelle Henneman (she/her)
United Methodist Church for All People
614-445-7342
jhenneman@4allpeople.net
<https://transpreacher.com/>
<https://lookedwithcompassion.wordpress.com/>