

Covenant of the Goddess Supports Gay Marriage

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BERKELEY, CA-September 2008 ; Covenant of the Goddess, a National Organization of Wiccan Congregations, offered a statement in support of Gay and Lesbian Marriage in California and Massachusetts. "Covenant of the Goddess has, since its inception in 1975, had clergy willing to celebrate the religious if not the legal joining of two members of the same gender. While we respect the right of the individual clergy within COG who may choose not to perform such a ceremony, we are in support of marriage between two committed adults of any gender, and a majority of our celebrants are willing to perform such ceremonies."

Covenant of the Goddess is supportive of stable family environments between spouses who are becoming family and views same gender marriages as a civil right. "As Pagans who are Witches or Wiccan, we remember our history and know that marriage is a civil contract, and historically, such was done to determine what property and belongings and livestock would be paid or received by the father of the bride or groom when the two families made an alliance. Same gender marriages date back to Ancient Greek and Roman times, when the majority of citizens were pagan. Marriage today is one way that two people can immediately become next of kin, and in today's society with national privacy act issues, it is even more important for everyone in a loving committed relationship to have this right." States Elder Priestess Lisa Morgenstern, National Public Information Officer for Covenant of the Goddess.

Covenant of the Goddess was founded in 1975 to increase cooperation among Witches and to secure for Witches and covens the legal protection enjoyed by members of other religions. The Covenant publishes a newsletter; issues ministerial credentials on request to qualified persons; sponsors a national festival each summer; and encourages networking nationally, as well as regionally through local councils.

The Covenant is incorporated as a non-profit religious organization in California, though it has grown to be an international organization. It is a confederation of covens and solitary members of various traditions, who share in the worship of the Goddess and the Old Gods and subscribe to a common code of ethics. The Covenant holds a Grand Council annually to decide matters which require deliberation by the full membership. Decisions are usually made by consensus.

In recent years, the Covenant has taken part in spiritual and educational conferences, interfaith outreach, large public rituals, environmental activism, community projects and social action, as well as efforts to correct negative stereotypes and promote accurate media portrayals. Its clergy perform legal marriages (handfastings), preside at funerals and other rituals of life-transition, and provide counseling to Witches including those in the military and in prisons. The Covenant also provides youth awards, sponsorship of college and university student groups, and legal assistance in instances of discrimination.