

REFINER'S FIRE FELLOWSHIP UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



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Presiding Bishop Yvette Flunder Applauds Supreme Court *Leader of International Network of Primarily Black LGBR Churches Speaks Out*

San Francisco (June 26, 2013) – Bishop Yvette Flunder, presiding bishop of The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries (TFAM), celebrated two decisions of the Supreme Court to support marriage equality. On June 26, 2013, the ban on same-gender marriage in California (Proposition 8) was lifted by the justices. In a separate decision on DOMA (the Defense of Marriage Act), federal employees can now receive benefits in a same-gender marriage.

“As an African American, I have witnessed and benefited from Supreme Court decisions that apply the Constitution equally to all people,” said Bishop Yvette Flunder. “The judicial branch of our democracy helped free Black Americans and inspired human rights movements for farm workers, women and now, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people.

“Today, all families headed by same-gender couples in California and those in federal jobs have access to the benefits of marriage. The decisions to end Prop 8 and DOMA send a signal to fair-minded people everywhere that all of our relationships and families are equally valued.

“While we celebrate the Supreme Court decisions on marriage equality, we know this is not the end but the beginning of the next chapter of our struggle for LGBT equality. We stand with all those living in the shadow of a stolen dream. Whether immigrants, women, minorities, the homeless, the imprisoned or any oppressed person, we are reminded that injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.

“We stand at the intersection of all issues but give particular attention to the disrespect for women and girls across this world which is the driving force behind homophobia, poverty, sex-trafficking and so much more,” said Bishop Flunder. “We call for a stop to religious and legal discrimination against women and girls and cry out against the persecution of sexual minorities in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Russia, the Americas and anywhere prejudice goes unchecked. This watershed moment will inspire a new wave of justice throughout the world.”

Bishop Flunder is the founding pastor of the City of Refuge in Oakland, California. In 2003, she was consecrated as the presiding bishop of The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries (TFAM). TFAM is a multi-denominational fellowship of primarily African American Christian leaders, laity and congregations from across the United States, as well as Mexico, Africa, and Asia. Refiners Fire Fellowship United Church of Christ located in Long Beach, CA where Bishop Bonnie L. Radden is the Senior Pastor and West Coast Regional Bishop of TFAM is a member of The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries. She is a trustee and adjunct professor at the Pacific School of Religion and sits on the boards of several regional and national not-for-profits. She holds a masters degree from the Pacific School of Religion and a doctorate of ministry from the San Francisco Theological Seminary. Bishop Flunder is married to Shirley Miller, her partner of 30 years.