



Queer Spiritual Gifts

March 20, 2025

Presented by:
Phoenix Community Church UCC

Introduction

- Welcome & Introductions
- We are recording this session and will make it available on youtube if everyone agrees. The slides will be available at <https://phoenixchurch.org>.
- Please keep comments and questions respectful. Speak only for your self.
- Queer people are loved children of God and our inherent, God-given worthiness is not up for debate.

What are Queer Spiritual Gifts?

- Definition: queer
 - A person who identifies themselves as LGBTQIA+ (i.e. lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, queer, intersex, asexual, non-binary, etc.) may identify themselves as queer.
 - Generally, a queer person is a person who does not fit the cisgender heterosexual societal expectation.
 - The term queer is sometimes used as an umbrella term instead of LGBTQIA+.
 - The term queer was originally an insult used against LGBTQIA+ people. It has been reclaimed as a term of pride. However, for many people it can still carry negative connotations.

What are Queer Spiritual Gifts?

- Definition: queer
 - The term queer can also be used as a verb or adjective.
 - To queer something is to challenge and disrupt the status quo, especially regarding the boundaries and norms of sexuality and gender identity.
 - For example, queer theory is an academic field of study that challenges and disrupts traditional notions of sexuality and gender identity.

What are Queer Spiritual Gifts?

- Define: spiritual / spirituality
 - The word “spirit” derives from the Latin spirare (breathe) and spiritus (breath). It is that which animates life.
 - In religious terms, it can refer to our relationship with God, the universe, or however we describe our higher power.
 - In non-religious terms, spirituality generally refers to relationships, support systems, and passions – the things which support and nurture a vibrant life.
 - In either case, it also concerns our search for meaning and purpose in life.

What are Queer Spiritual Gifts?

- Define: spiritual gifts
 - Talents, abilities, and experiences
 - Nurture relationship with God (however defined), each other, and nature.
 - Help us understand the world in a way that provides meaning and purpose
 - Support and nurture a vibrant and fulfilling life.

What are Queer Spiritual Gifts?

- Queer spiritual gifts are the talents, abilities, and experiences of queer people that nurture relationship and a more meaningful, fulfilling life for themselves and those who know them.

What are Queer Spiritual Gifts?

- Some general examples (we'll go into greater detail on a few of these):
 - Questioning the status quo
 - Acceptance of ambiguity and uncertainty
 - A deep self-knowledge
 - Openness to new perspectives and people
 - Breaking boundaries
 - Sex as a sacrament
 - Building bridges
 - Creating community / chosen family

Queer Spiritual Gifts (Ken)

- Questioning the status quo
 - Queer people are often taught they are abnormal, immoral, or sinful because of who they are, which causes low self-esteem and makes people hide their true selves or even harm themselves.
 - Accepting our true selves and living authentically means questioning and challenging what we are taught.
 - Think for yourself
 - Always ask WHY we are taught what we are taught
 - Queerness makes people question and challenge boundaries, especially as to whether our boundaries are really “God-given” or established by fearful, power-pursuing humans.

Queer Spiritual Gifts

- Break-out discussion
 - We'll break into small groups for about 10 minutes.
 - Questions for discussion:
 - How has being queer or knowing someone who's queer made you question your beliefs?
 - Has this sacred skepticism affected other areas of your life beyond sexuality and gender identity / expression?
 - When we come back, we'll spend another 5 minutes sharing highlights from our group reflections.

Queer Spiritual Gifts (Angie)

"Being queer saved my life. Often we see queerness as deprivation. But when I look at my life, I saw that queerness demanded an alternative innovation from me. I had to make alternative routes; it made me curious; it made me ask, 'Is this enough for me?'"

—Ocean Vuong

Queer Spiritual Gifts (Angie)

- Knowing Yourself
 - The worlds we grow up in often offer us a smooth and easy path forward for our lives – marriage, children, etc. Being Queer can make these paths less than ideal or even uncomfortable and create a motivation to seek more than might be acceptable otherwise. This is the gift that encourages us to seek new horizons and find realities that might have gone unexplored.

Queer Spiritual Gifts (Angie)

- Knowing Yourself
 - In many cases, we grow up hearing falsehoods about what it means to be Queer. This can create doubt and fear about our future lives. Can we be happy? Can life be fulfilling as a Queer person? We are called to faith, to create a life that defies the lies we have been told. The often deeper and stronger convictions that this creates are indeed a gift.

Queer Spiritual Gifts (Angie)

- Knowing Yourself
 - Queer folk are often forced to question their own worth. Surviving and thriving in the world requires a healthy sense of self that can be hidden by the falsehoods we are taught. The struggle to find our authentic and worthy selves is a gift that helps us create healthy images of ourselves.

Queer Spiritual Gifts

- Break-out discussion
 - We'll break into small groups for about 10 minutes.
 - Questions for discussion:
 - How do you deal with the expectations of others?
 - When has a challenge that left you stronger?
 - When have you felt less than worthy because of what someone else said or believed about you?
 - When we come back, we'll spend another 5 minutes sharing highlights from our group reflections.

Queer Spiritual Gifts (Em)

- Openness to new views
 - What does it mean to be feminine, masculine, androgynous?
 - What is in the 'and's'?
 - Earth AND Sea
 - Night AND Day



Queer Spiritual Gifts

- Break-out discussion
 - We'll break into small groups for about 10 minutes.
 - Questions for discussion:
 - What do you like about your gender?
 - What is a dichotomy in your life that can be improved by seeing the 'and'?
 - When we come back, we'll spend another 5 minutes sharing highlights from our group reflections.

Queer Spiritual Gifts (Katy)

- Who's Boundaries? Where do they come from?
 - Law, Family, Friends, Fear, Church, Experience, A Specific Sexuality Group

Queer Spiritual Gifts (Katy)

- Labels For Comfort, Compartmentalizing, Identity. Do they help or hurt?
 - sources and labels we may draw upon for setting our sexual boundaries, have their own set of rules or expectations on how we behave within that identity.
 - as a Bisexual Woman, judgement has come from both heterosexual and queer communities. The worst was the assumption that I wasn't or couldn't be faithful to any one sex or person
 - affirmation and love through marriage, partnership, friendship, conversation, reading and listening to the stories of others
 - both rejection and affirmation in churches and spiritual groups
 - lifetime to discover and understand our bodies, sexuality, and preferred expression. Sexuality and sexual expression can be fluid.

Queer Spiritual Gifts (Katy)

- How/Where Does Sexuality Fit Into Our Spirituality?
 - developing spirituality has been one of the best and most important parts of life's journey.
 - coming to terms with body and senses given as a gift from my Creator as an extremely intuitive, deeply feeling, highly sensual, bisexual woman.
 - our Creator loves us wherever we are in our ever changing journey on this earth.

Queer Spiritual Gifts

- Break-out discussion
 - We'll break into small groups for about 10 minutes.
 - Questions for discussion:
 - When have you felt constricted by unnecessary boundaries?
 - What labels do you use for yourself? Why? Where did they come from? Did you choose them consciously?
 - Do you think sexuality is fluid?
 - Do you understand your sexuality to be a part of your spirituality?
 - When we come back, we'll spend another 5 minutes sharing highlights from our group reflections.

Conclusions

- Final remarks / thoughts / reflections
- Are people comfortable with us sharing the recording?



Thank you!

- We appreciate you joining us for today's discussion.
- For follow up questions or to offer feedback and other comments please email office@phoenixchurch.org.