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Hudson Valley LGBTQ Community Center Calls for Peaceful Vigil in Response to Anti-Gay Marriage Forum at Bardavon on September 26

KINGSTON, NEW YORK -- The Hudson Valley LGBTQ Community Center has called for a peaceful candlelight vigil in silent protest of a "panel discussion on family and marriage" at The Bardavon 1869 Opera House in Poughkeepsie on Monday, September 26.

Panelists for the forum, titled "The Ring Makes the Difference," include Johann Christoph Arnold, a senior pastor of the Bruderhof Church Communities in Rifton, who has called for a national referendum on same-sex marriage; Timothy Michael Dolan, Archbishop of New York, who consistently has spoken out against marriage equality for LGBTQ people; W. Bradford Wilcox, director of the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia; and Elizabeth Marquardt, director of the Center for Marriage and Families at the Institute for American Values. The event is sponsored by the Bruderhof Church Communities.

"We are saddened by this action by the Bruderhof Church Communities," said Vanessa Shelmandine, Director of Programs and Services for the Hudson Valley LGBTQ Community Center, "especially because the Bruderhof has long championed peace and charity towards its neighbors here in the Valley. We will gather outside the September 26 panel discussion to show that LGBTQ people are family too, and we have an equal right to celebrate love and marriage."

Protestors will carry candles and signs attesting to their equal right to marriage. Those wishing to participate are asked to gather on the sidewalk across from the Bardavon on Market Street at 5:30 p.m. Marriage equality in New York state was approved by the legislature on June 24 and the first marriages under the new law were performed on July 24.

The Hudson Valley LGBTQ Community Center, Inc., was established in 2005, and opened its doors in February 2007 in Kingston. Its membership rolls include more than 1,500 individuals and families. The Center provides social services, cultural outreach and advocacy on issues important to the entire Hudson Valley

LGBTQ community. Visit <http://www.lgbtqcenter.org> or call (845) 331-5300.

ATTENTION REPORTERS: Center spokesperson Vanessa Shelmandine is available to discuss this peaceful protest. Please call (845) 331-5300.



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