



2021 Phoenix Gay Pride Parade: A State Draw

Gene Fougner



After a year of Covid and the pride festivities on Zoom, the gay pride event was in full force once again. My spouse (of almost 40 years) and I safely enjoyed the “40 Years of Fortitude” gay pride parade last weekend. It was a moving experience to see people like us everywhere, from the start of the parade with roaring Harley Davidsons to the marching band and chorus and ending with fathers with children on their shoulders.



For two hours businesses, educational institutions, TV anchors, politicians, sanitation companies, and city governments marched to support their LGBTQ+ communities in



solidarity. Amidst demonstrators calling us names and promising hell, it was apparent this parade crowd of over 10,000 did not strike back with hate but reflected tolerance. The cheering of the supporters of gay people eventually drowned out the promoters of hate and threats of death by God’s hand.

It is often lonely to live, worship and work in our community as a gay family. This experience was moving and we made friends and shared life stories all along the parade route, including a Prescott lesbian couple with eight children. We made other friends from Iowa and Phoenix while on the Light Rail and waiting in lines. It was



hopeful to see at least four church bodies participating, including the Episcopal and United Church of Christ from around Arizona. Wouldn’t it be great if we gay families could feel this kind of solidarity in the Prescott area more! Our church is one possible supporter for them if we remain visible.

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