

An Open Letter to Owatonna Mayor and City Council

- Thomas A. Kuntz (Mayor): 507-456-5080, thomas.kuntz@ci.owatonna.mn.us
- Doug Voss (At Large): 507-475-0550, doug.voss@owatonna.gov
- Dan Boeke (At Large): 507-363-1932, daniel.boeke@owatonna.gov
- Nathan Dotson (First Ward): 507-363-1189, nathan.dotson@owatonna.gov
- Greg Schultz (Second Ward): 507-456-4584, greg.schultz@owatonna.gov
- David C. Burbank (Third Ward): 507-451-3166, david.burbank@owatonna.gov
- Kevin Raney (Fourth Ward): 507-456-3116, kevin.raney@owatonna.gov
- Brent L. Svenby (Fifth Ward): 507-363-1136, brent.svenby@owatonna.gov

I am writing to Mayor Kuntz and to our City Council to initiate a public conversation about very concerning behavior by Mayor Kuntz.

My name is Nathan Black and I am the founder and Chair of Rainbowatonna, a new LGBTQ+ community organization here in Owatonna.

As you may have heard, we had some very distressing and disappointing behavior from residents and neighbors who harassed and intimidated our vendors, the original venue of our drag show, and the church hosting our Pride Worship Service. For more information on what happened, please refer to our previous press release: [Owatonna's Second LGBTQ+ Pride Event Marches On Despite Challenges](#)

What you may not know is that Mayor Tom Kuntz participated in some of this behavior.

On Tuesday, June 27th, Mayor Kuntz showed up at Associated Church, the host church for the Pride Worship Service, and demanded to speak with the pastor. After a staff member explained the pastor is out on medical leave, he finally identified himself. He was upset that Associated was hosting this service and asked bizarre questions like, "are there going to be stripper poles in the sanctuary." If you're curious about the content of the actual service, here is a link to the video: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/280729509515270/permalink/1316915955896615/>

The Associated Church staff member gave him my email address, since I would be preaching, and he emailed me on June 29th. Here is the conversation:

Owatonna Mayor Tom Kuntz

Inbox x

⌵ ⏻ ↗



tom <tkuntz11@gmail.com>
to me ▾

Thu, Jun 29, 7:29 AM (12 days ago) ☆ ↶ ⋮

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

My understanding is you are the pastor who will be holding the service on July 8th. As a christen I just want to encourage all of us to follow Gods commandments and am hoping your service follows Gods words.

Mayor Tom



Nathan Michael Black

to thomas.kuntz ▾

Thu, Jun 29, 2:29 PM (12 days ago)



Hi Mayor Tom,
I received this email and before I responded, I wanted to make sure it actually came from you.
Thanks!
Nathan Black
Rainbowatonna

...

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **tom** <lkuntz11@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Jun 29, 2023 at 7:29 AM
Subject: Owatonna Mayor Tom Kuntz
To: [nathan](#)

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

My understanding is you are the pastor who will be holding the service on July 8th. As a christen I just want to encourage all of us to follow Gods commandments and am hoping your service follows Gods words.

Mayor Tom

--

Sent from Gmail Mobile



Thomas A. Kuntz

to me ▾

Thu, Jun 29, 4:05 PM (12 days ago)



Yes I Sent it. My phone number is 507-456-5080

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone
Get [Outlook for Android](#)

From: Nathan Michael Black <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, June 29, 2023 2:29:08 PM
To: Thomas A. Kuntz <Thomas.Kuntz@ci.owatonna.mn.us>
Subject: Fwd: Owatonna Mayor Tom Kuntz

...



Nathan Michael Black

to Thomas ▾

Jul 2, 2023, 12:13 AM (9 days ago)



Ok, well it is certainly good to hear from the Mayor of our beautiful town. I have been meaning to reach out to you in order to request an official proclamation naming July 8, 2023 as "Rainbowatonna Day" in honor of our LGBTQ+ citizens and neighbors.

We would love to have your support in this way.

And rest assured, the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ will be proclaimed joyfully at the Pride Worship service on July 8th at 9am. I'd be honored if you'd attend in person, otherwise we'll likely be streaming the service live.

Thank you for your history of leadership in Owatonna. I hope you have a good weekend and holiday celebrating the promise of our country.

Peace,
Nathan

...



Thomas A. Kuntz

to me ▾

Mon, Jul 3, 11:08 AM (8 days ago) ☆ ↶ ⋮

I am so sorry but I just can't do the proclamation and I will be out of town.

Mayor Tom

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

Get [Outlook for Android](#)

From: Nathan Michael Black <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Sunday, July 2, 2023 12:13:43 AM
To: Thomas A. Kuntz <Thomas.Kuntz@ci.owatonna.mn.us>
Subject: Re: Owatonna Mayor Tom Kuntz

...
...



Nathan Michael Black <[REDACTED]>

to Thomas ▾

Mon, Jul 3, 12:13 PM (8 days ago) ☆ ↶ ⋮

Can you say more about why you can't do the proclamation?

...

On Mon, Jul 3, 2023 at 11:08 AM Thomas A. Kuntz <Thomas.Kuntz@ci.owatonna.mn.us> wrote:

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From: Nathan Michael Black <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Sunday, July 2, 2023 12:13:43 AM
To: Thomas A. Kuntz <Thomas.Kuntz@ci.owatonna.mn.us>
Subject: Re: Owatonna Mayor Tom Kuntz

Ok, well it is certainly good to hear from the Mayor of our beautiful town. I have been meaning to reach out to you in order to request an official proclamation naming July 8, 2023 as "Rainbowatonna Day" in honor of our LGBTQ+ citizens and neighbors.

In addition to going to Associated Church, I also learned that he went to Torey's and made some complaints about the drag show being hosted there.

I would like an explanation about why an elected public official is attempting to interfere with a religious service.

I would also like an explanation and public apology from Mayor Kuntz about his attempt to harass and intimidate the organizers and hosts of LGBTQ+ events.

Is this the kind of leadership we have in Owatonna? Will there be any consequences for his behavior?

Thank you,
Nathan Black

Update as of 7/11/23:

I just came across an overwhelmingly bigoted prayer that Mayor Kuntz posted on his personal page.

His behavior these past few weeks has been problematic, but finding a public “prayer” that he wrote that articulated his bigotry shows that his behavior wasn’t just problematic or maybe even an emotional accident... Instead, his letter shows that his actions come from very intentional, premeditated bigotry.

The only satisfactory response from Mayor Kuntz is his immediate resignation. There is no place for homophobic bigotry in city government.

Heavenly Father,

We pray for wisdom as we know of upcoming public events where sin and brokenness will be celebrated and where sexually explicit acts will be normalized. We are very concerned about this, not only for our children, but for those adults who will participate as well. The Bible speaks that in the beginning you created man and woman and that you gave husband and wife to each other within marriage. We know what your Word teaches and we want to honor that. Help us to hold onto your truth.

We also want to pray for every person who participates, that they would long to have a relationship with you. We pray that they would come to know the love you have for them as you created each one to be your son or daughter. We pray for the healing of any loneliness, rejection, hopelessness, or trauma they may have experienced in their lives. May you bring people into their lives who can encourage them. We want all people to seek acceptance in your loving arms and know peace.

We pray that these public acts would not draw in young children or impressionable teens with curiosity. We pray that you would guard the hearts and minds of children and help us to bring them up in your Word. Fill their minds with that which is pure and lovely, noble, admirable, and praiseworthy. We pray the sweet innocence of childhood will prevail.

We pray for business owners, both locally and across the nation, to support positive, edifying, and wholesome events that both children and adults can enjoy. We pray for public leaders, that they would have wisdom to discern how they can honor you as they also follow the laws of our land. We pray for all people as they face pressures in their places of work or other relationships, that they too would be given wisdom to make the best choices possible.

And for myself, Lord- I want to live a life that is pleasing to you, so help me to daily recognize the sins in my own life and confess them. I want to live my life in gratitude for all that you have done for me. Help me not to just pray for these new few weeks until July 8, but continue to pray for those who don't know you. I pray that you would help me to reach out and build relationships with others who still need to know you. I pray for the right words and the right times so that more people can be led to the purposeful life only you can give. Amen.