

Flying out over Boston

By [E. Carrington Heath](#)

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My wife and I are flying out today, over Boston, the city where marriage equality got its start. We are flying out over Old South Church, the place where we were married. We are flying into California, a place where yesterday morning our marriage wasn't legal. And we are flying to General Synod, the biannual meeting of the United Church of Christ, the church that recognized our marriage before the federal government ever did.

Our marriage certificate from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is packed in my bag. I don't know why. I know it's not rational, but I just want to keep it close this week.

Yesterday morning it sat on our coffee table as my wife and I did what we have been doing on many mornings for the last two weeks. With MSNBC on the television, and SCOTUSblog pulled up on the laptop, we sat next to each other on the couch holding hands and praying.

When the decision on DOMA came in, it took our breath away and we broke down sobbing. In a good way. I have never cried for joy harder than I did yesterday morning. My father texted us: One down.

It took seven months and nine days after our wedding for the federal government to recognize our marriage. Every day was a day too long, but we are so aware that we were some of the lucky ones. Couples we know who have been married for years felt the full weight of discrimination for so much longer. And then there are the couples we have known who had at least one partner who didn't live to see federal marriage equality. We mourned for them yesterday.

Yesterday I thought about all the same-sex couples whose marriages I have officiated as a pastor. I thought about two of our closest friends who were married in Massachusetts and who are welcoming twin boys in a few weeks. Their sons will never know a country that does not recognize their moms' marriage as equal.

I thought about two other friends from Maine who had to be married in Massachusetts because their state did not yet recognize equal marriage at the time. And I thought about two men I married from California last month who will now return with a marriage that will be honored.

And I thought about all those couples from the South who have flown to Vermont in order to have a legal marriage that they knew would mean very little in their home states. I thought about friends I grew up with back home. They are still waiting, and we won't forget them.

Last night, as I do many summer evenings in Vermont, I went fly fishing. There was a group of high school students swimming nearby. They were celebrating the end of DOMA and talking about what it meant.

When they got close I told them that my wife and my marriage had become federally recognized that day. They smiled and cheered and congratulated me. And they told me that for most of their friends and classmates, equality is a no-brainer. As one young man told me, in 50 years we are not going to believe that we had to debate this.

That gives me hope, because I can't imagine having a similar discussion during my high school years. I know the world is changing.

Yesterday my wife and I began to jokingly call each other “Federally Recognized Spouse”. As in, “Federally Recognized Spouse, are you coming back downstairs?” We talked about needing to file an amended 2012 tax return. We then spent the rest of the day working on our gay agenda of doing laundry and packing for our trip. But, lightheartedness aside, when we went to sleep last night we did so a little more equal than we had woken up that morning.

Today, flying out with her at my side, I know that we are only traveling towards a more equal future, and that God’s love is there and that it has been with us all along.

*Originally posted at [Heath's blog](#)*