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GROUP PLANS MAY 1 PROTEST OF WESTBORO BAPTIST CHURCH Rally to Draw Hundreds near Topeka Church with Message of Acceptance

TOPEKA, Ks., Hundreds are expected to turn out for a rally at Gage Park in Topeka, KS on Saturday, May 1. The event will take place just blocks from the home of Fred Phelps and the Westboro Baptist Church.

The church is notorious for its anti-gay protests of funerals, schools, and high-profile public events, claiming that most natural disasters and terrorist attacks are God's punishment for a society that tolerates homosexuality. Phelps and his ministry are known for the slogans they use against people they deem sinful, including "God Hates Fags" and "Thank God for dead soldiers." On March 8, the Supreme Court agreed to hear a case involving a WBC protest, after the family of a soldier who was killed in Iraq sued the group for picketing their son's funeral.

According to organizer Chris Love, the primary goal of the March is to "turn the tables, using the very same rights and laws as the WBC." Love says the event expresses a message of tolerance and acceptance of all people; a message that the group hopes will spread beyond Topeka. "We won't just be there for the WBC," Love added. "In fact, it tends to be as much about community and fun as it is about the church."

The event has drawn crowds of over 400 in years past, with people from all regions of the country. Love said that it is "a diverse mix of race, gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, and political viewpoint" that has drawn national media attention. The March stresses the use of peaceful and lawful demonstration, and is open to anyone who wishes to join without fear of negative incident.

The gathering begins at 2:00pm on May 1st at the corner of 10th Street and Gage Boulevard in Topeka.

The Million "Fag" March was first organized in March of 2008 by Chris Love and Bethany Rowell. This is the third year of what is now an annual event near the Westboro Baptist Church in Topeka, Kansas. Details can be found at <http://www.millionfagmarch.com>

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If you'd like more information about this topic, or to schedule an interview with Chris Love, please call 785-783-4730 or e-mail mfm@millionfagmarch.com