



galanews

THE  LETTER

Serving members and friends of the
Community of Christ

November 2009
Volume 20 Issue 4

Camp Doniphan 2009



By Chuck Hewitt

This year's GALA retreat was by far one of the best retreats I have been to in years. But as with all GALA retreats we come for reconnection with old friends, to meet new friends, and recharge God's spirit within us. We had 85 people in attendance! 85 wonderful people each on their own individual journeys and places in life.

Friday night began with registration then a social time giving each person time to reacquaint

and time to also meet the board. The evening ended with the movie "MILK." What a perfect start off!

Devotions the next day were early, but well attended, as David Woosley took us through meditation and prayer. Later, during sharing of our stories I noticed different stories from what I first heard ten years ago. More of the stories contained "this was where I was at and this is

(Continued on page 8)

GALA

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President's Message *by David Howard*

Even though it has been two months (boy it takes a long time to get a newsletter out!) I still have fond, warm memories of the retreat and what went on during that retreat process-wise.

Last year's retreat at Temple Grove was one of deep sharing and healing...that really brought us together. This year's retreat was characterized by a unity and energy that hasn't been present since I have been involved with GALA. People chilled, people enjoyed, people engaged and people participated. Individual sharing and relationships were developed. We celebrated the baptism of Kris Pope. One of the presenters said "It was the first retreat of any kind in a long time where I could come and laugh and have a great time!" It was almost a flawlessly executed retreat. And people responded with extreme generosity that enabled us to finish in the black. Thanks to each of you for responding to that need.

I would like to thank every person that was involved in the planning and execution of every aspect of the retreat.

In my remarks at the closing service on Monday morning, I shared the story of Jesus and the Disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus asked them to wait and pray for him while he petitioned His creator. They slept.

Many of you have worked hard and waited for years for change to happen and to feel of worth in the Community of Christ. Some have left to participate in other communities. Some have rejected religion altogether because of the inability of institutions to react and change. Others continue to wait, but have placed a limit on how long that will continue. Others still question...why?

I too have my limits. But I also believe that we all have revved up a process that is truly moving the agenda forward. I desire dramatic movement during this next World Conference. As I have said before, I am extremely impressed from top to bottom with those on World Church staff navigating this process. Let us trust this process, and let it play out before personal decisions are made. Wait and pray as Jesus asked.

Several mission centers are working toward information and educational meetings with congregations in their jurisdictions to move the agenda forward at the local level. Get involved in your mission center and facilitate these events. Let us help move this Community to a better place!

World Conference Resolutions

by
David Howard

The Welcoming Community Network (WCN) and GALA have been working intensely since the beginning of August on appropriate legislation that would move the legislation forward on issues that affect our community and inhibit full inclusion in the life of the Church. These resolutions cover the gamut from seeking information on referred resolutions in previous conferences, to ordaining LGBT persons in committed relationships, to opening up our priesthood to marry same sex couples, to recognizing all relationships in a sacramental way. Five resolutions were initially offered, and recently two more were added. All of these can be found on the welcomingcommunitynetwork.org and galaweb.org websites.

I want to personally thank WCN for taking the lead on drafting the resolutions and for the tremendous amount of hours that were invested in this effort.

To date the Eastern Great Lakes Mission Center has recommended the request for information, policy on priesthood and legal marriage resolutions be forwarded to the conference for discussion. Additional amendments will be considered for discussion at conferences in Florida, Missouri, Minnesota, Colorado, Texas and California. Eastern Canada has already forwarded resolutions dealing with the marriage issue.

Resolutions have been printed in the October and November Heralds and will continue to be printed in future Heralds. If you have any questions about the resolutions or the process, please contact me at howard092248@yahoo.com (216-712-7218), or Sam Marmoy at sfmarmoy@aol.com. Deadlines for submitting resolutions to the World Church is December 11.

I feel God's spirit moving abundantly through the Church and our community as this process unfolds. May God continue to bless each one of us.

Search for Names of "Missing Persons"

Welcoming Community Network is in search of the names of people who have left the Community of Christ either in part or totally due to the church's stance on homosexuality. These persons could be LGBT members, their parents or family, and allies who have left for another denomination or reduced their involvement in the church; also members who have had their priesthood withdrawn, been otherwise silenced, have refused to accept a call to the priesthood, or have renounced their membership or priesthood; as well as those who attend but refuse to take communion or participate in other sacraments (such as performing weddings) due to the church's discriminatory policy.

We are planning to use these names in a display at the 2010 International Community of Christ Conference and possibly other events such as reunions and mission center conferences to demonstrate the loss to the church due to this issue. We must therefore have permission to use them in this manner. It would be helpful if along with the name, we receive information on how we can contact that person to obtain their permission; mailing address, e-mail, or phone number. If the person is not living, a close family member needs to be provided. For this project to be a "go" and be effective we need as many names as we can get. Permission to use names is crucial, but permission to also use a picture makes it all the more effective, so pictures may also be needed.

This project is being developed as one way of having more of a presence on the floor at World Conference beyond what GALA and WCN have done in the past. It will keep the loss that the church is experiencing from GLBT members and allies leaving the church or minimizing their participation in the hearts and minds of the delegates. This is a part of the power of sharing our stories; but we need to remember that we will never change the minds of those opposed to full inclusion. This effort is to increase the awareness of the impact of current church policies and the need for change for delegates who are uncertain on how to vote.

Since it takes time to contact everyone, it is important to submit names to us as soon as possible. Confidential transfer of these names to us can be done by e-mail to missingnames@ymail.com.

Newsworthy

GALA Board Retreat

The annual GALA Board retreat is being held at Stone Church Community of Christ in Independence over the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday weekend, January 15-17. Topics for discussion will be our regional retreat strategy and World Conference preparations. Part of the retreat will also be spent in conversations with the WCN Board. Saturday's evening activities may include another community viewing of "For the Bible Tells Me So", with plans for providing a worship service for one of the area congregations Sunday morning.

If you have any items for the Board to consider at their retreat, please forward them to cfrey@newstrax.com.

For The Bible Tells Me So

On September 8, 2009 at the Open Arms Community of Christ, GALA sponsored a showing of the movie "For the Bible Tells Me So". The movie traces the story of the families of five lesbian and gay persons on their coming out journey and the issues they faced.

Fifty five were in attendance and stayed for the panel discussion with Fran Zimmerman, Pat Marmoy, Merlyn Risser, and Saundra Merth, moderated by David Howard. Refreshments were supplied by Chuck and Mike Hewitt, including a real theatre popcorn popper! The evening was a supportive uplifting event which included such comments like "this film should be made available for every Mission Center" to a voice from an lovely older lady who said "I know God loves us all and don't know why anyone would not love gay

	<p>If you plan on making a purchase from Amazon, don't forget to go to the GALA website first, then click on the Amazon logo. GALA receives a percentage of all purchases this way. Here's a trick; create a bookmark for Amazon and then go into the properties of the bookmark and change the address to the GALA website.</p>
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people." Additional showings will be held in the future.

To rent or purchase performance rights, please contact Paul Marchant, First Run Features, (212) 243-0600 X22, paul@firstrunfeatures.com.

Creating Change Conference

Every year the Gay and Lesbian Task Force conducts a national conference called Creating Change. This nationally acclaimed conference focuses on developing skills in order to effectuate change in our communities, states and nation. It is an effective skill building exercise that is appropriate for those wanting to be part of change in any organization, gay or straight. The next conference will be held February 3-7, 2010 in Dallas, Texas.

Affirmation, Gay and Lesbian Mormons, has invited GALA to participate with them so we can qualify for group rates. Visit the GLTF website at http://www.thetaskforce.org/events/creating_change for more information. I would encourage you to consider this opportunity. If you are interested in the group rates, contact howard092248@yahoo.com.

World Conference Planning

Over the past year, GALA, WCN and the Joint Task Force have been busily engaged in planning for World Conference 2010. The goal is to provide opportunities for education and sharing through a number of different venues. We are already working hard with WCN to prepare mission centers for their conferences and the introduction of resolutions on LGBT issues. We have already been successful in the Eastern Great Lakes Mission Center and targeting efforts in Florida, Missouri, and California for additional support. Resolutions are also in various stages of the process in Texas, Ontario, Iowa, Minnesota and Colorado. Let us uphold the World Church leaders as they discern their way through this difficult process. Remember we are not doing this to gain inclusion at the expense of others; therefore, we need to be supportive of the burden our leaders carry and of the process.

We are also planning the GALA/WCN reception, the worship service, and identifying symbols for supporters. We have requested a booth this year and are also looking for a larger home that

(Continued on page 5)

(Newsworthy Continued from page 4)

can serve as an educational facility, drop in center, movie theatre and seminar space for the week. Several World Church leaders have made themselves available for us during the week.

If you have any ideas you want us to pursue, please let us know.

Teaching Moment *by David Howard*

One is never too old to learn something new or become sensitized to others. My most recent came abruptly, but graciously during the planning of the recent retreat at Camp Doniphan. As you may have noticed the name of the banquet was changed during the month before from "Trailer Trash Ball" to the "Pink Party". While segments of the gay community love to camp with John Waters and Devine, others saw offense to those that have been marginalized by the moniker. President Veazey brought it up and when I shared it with others, they had also mentioned an uneasiness about the term. I apologize for any harm this has placed on anyone.

There were two teaching moments in this for all of us. Whenever you feel something offends or marginalizes a person or group of people, SPEAK UP..advocate for them! Secondly, we as LGBT people know the power words, actions, and stereotypes have to inflict emotional and physical pain. We of all people should be the most sensitive to the effect our words and actions have on others.

By the way, all but a small handful of people dressed in pink for the banquet! Visit the banquet gallery on the GALA website.

Regional Retreats

The Executive Board has been discussing GALA retreat strategy. A loose policy rotates retreats from east coast, central, west coast, central, etc. This has not been followed in recent years with the last four retreats being held in Texas, Kansas, Pennsylvania, and Missouri. A decision on next year's retreat will be made by the end of November. We are trying to find a western location that will also have good accessibility for the Midwest and East Coast members. Check out the website (galaweb.org) frequently for the announcement.

During the business meeting at Camp Doniphan over Labor Day weekend, a series of straw

polls were taken to try to gain the sense of the membership on GALA retreats. While there was good support for looking at dates for the international retreat other than Labor Day weekend, near unanimous support was for the international retreat to remain as is; but to supplement it with regional retreats at other times.

Conversations are occurring in California, Florida, and Michigan. We would ask that dates be coordinated through Clyde Frey (cfrey@newstrax.com) so they can be publicized on the website and in the newsletter. The goal of these regional retreats is to increase the opportunities for participation by GALA members and friends who are unable to attend the international retreat.

TREASURER'S REPORT

by Pat Danielson

The fiscal year for 2009 covered 10/1/08 thru 9/30/09. The figures for the year broke down as follows:

Actual Income	Budgeted Income
\$24,784	\$22,105
Actual Expenses	Budgeted Expenses
\$24,103	\$22,105

This yielded a net income for the year of \$681.

Our predominant sources of income this year have come from membership fees, donations, and sales of merchandise. Membership dues are invoiced in January of each year. We thank you for your generosity of donations and will gladly accept them at any time of the year. We appreciate the purchases of the book, Homosexual Saints from which GALA receives a commission and revenue from the sale of GALA merchandise which includes pins and clothing items. A reminder that GALA receives a commission when you purchase an item off of Amazon.com when you access it through the GALA website and then enter Amazon through the link located on our pages!

Our expenses this year have been spent mainly in the area of marketing costs. This year we took on the challenge of creating GALA brochures, banners, pins, T-shirts and hats. Another major cost is the newsletter printing and mailing. We have been printing 700 and mailing about 575, so we are looking to reduce the printing amount to save on costs. If you wish to receive a newsletter by email only, please send a message to Clyde Frey through the GALA website.

The 2009 retreat at Camp Doniphan was a success with over 80 people attending. We received \$1064 through the silent auction, \$951 through the offering, \$485 through merchandise sales, and \$329 through Gay Bingo.

2009 Business Meeting

By Clyde Frey

Annual Business Meeting, Camp Doniphan, September 6, 2009

The Annual Membership Meeting was held in the late afternoon with the approval of the Annual Business Meeting Minutes of August 31, 2008, Temple Grove, PA meeting.

Pat Danielson, Treasurer, reviewed the income and expenses for the past year and although we were running under budget, our income had slightly exceeded our expenses to date.

GALA President, David Howard reflected on the many activities of the Board of Directors over this past year some of which include:

- ◆ Investment of funds in a higher interest savings account.
- ◆ Development & printing of a new GALA brochure
- ◆ Upgrading the quality & content of the GALA newsletter
- ◆ Realizing an increase in the number of paid GALA memberships this past year
- ◆ E-mailing the GALA newsletter to a number of World Church officials
- ◆ Convening meetings with World Church officials
- ◆ Adopting a new tagline for logo that will be more inclusive
- ◆ Sponsoring a viewing of "For the Bible Tells Me So"
- ◆ Beginning World Conference Planning
- ◆ Initiating Retreat Strategic Planning
- ◆ Developing new GALA merchandise
- ◆ Modifying GALA logo
- ◆ Beginning & administering a Face book page

It was noted that we have new banners, as displayed on the gate to the entrance of the camp, & have utilized them at Pride events in Buffalo, Kansas City & San Francisco this past summer.

It was also noted that the new GALA lapel pins have arrived and are now available for sale in the same area as the 'GALA Store'; a new addition to our annual retreat.

Book sales of "Homosexual Saints" continue & folks were reminded that if you know anyone that needs to order from Amazon.com, ask them to access the GALA website at www.galaweb.org and click on the Amazon.com link from there as we receive a

commission from Amazon sales that are accessed in this manner!

The GALA website has changed over the past year and we will be adding more to it as we move ahead and especially as we approach the 2010 World Conference. Comments and ideas on what you might like to see on the website are always welcome.

David Howard, President and Pat Danielson, Treasurer reviewed the proposed 2010 GALA Budget income & expense items. Recognition was given to Mike Hewitt for design & implementation of plants at the Temple that was accomplished this year and is part of the proposed budget to continue next year. Discussion was entertained about the 50th Anniversary Organ Project and how GALA might provide support for this upcoming event. Additionally it was shared that seed money will continue to be provided for local Pride Celebrations around the country during the next budget year. The proposed budget was moved, seconded and approved as presented.

Many people participated in the discussions about the possibility of holding regional retreats in addition to the Annual Retreat. We talked about viable weekends, alternating locations, time of year for retreat(s), costs associated with retreats, reduction of costs or subsidizing of costs especially as we encourage student age (collegiate) participation. The interaction was interesting and lively as folks made every effort to provide helpful ideas. There was also some indication that perhaps some folks might be interested in a cruise type event at some point.

The Nominating Committee presented the slate of officers for election which were approved. President-Elect, David Howard; Undersecretary for Publications, David Woosley; and Member-at-Large (3 year term), Sandra Merth.

All this activity occurred in about an hour-and-a-half and everyone was blessed by the attendance and participation of those that were able to join and share.

Weeding–Cheville Chapel–Outdoor Garden

By Hal McKain

September 5, 2009

It is very peace-full here in this outdoor chapel. Many people have made this spot special by donating their time, energy, money, prayers, expertise, etc. The development of this spot just west of the Cheville Chapel on the Graceland University campus is a gem, of a Holy cause. I sit on the art bench. This was created by an artist from Osceola, IA and offered for auction at a Lamoni, IA art dealership. I am glad that the Graceland campus ministers secured it. I sit lightly, (Smile), so that I

will not mar the many famous quotes that the female artist carved into the hard surface. The bench, with no sides, is about 24" by 48". It is very heavy, dark in color, with the inscriptions showing through the seat in white. Only by seeing this in person can one grasp the total beauty that the artist-creator brought from her precious soul into her work. I set here on the corner of this bench in this flower garden, making sure that I do not have any metal brads in my back pockets that might mar the art work. I really would prefer not sit on it because my rear covers some of what I would like to read. The quotes are priceless. My mind turns to prayer, praying for a spark of the Divine to guide my pen. I notice that my pen was even made by a local artist, Carole Walker, a GU grad.

Graceland University is a Holy place. I remember reading about the precious woman who donated most of the land. I also remember reading the history of Joseph Smith III who helped begin the process of creating Graceland. This is what we so lovingly think about when we feel within us the fascinating Spiritual heritage that resides here. Just like the donation of this bench to this outdoor garden and walk-way, there are endless ways that everyone can be a part of "grand-designs"!

I see to my South the result of millions of dollars that have been donated for a contemporarily refurbished science building. My being near this campus approximately 25 years as a resident, has made it possible to feel a concept of a, "Divine mission." It does not have to be perfect. It just has to represent our very best!

Today, I have enjoyed eating two donuts and drinking coffee from a cup created by another artist-friend Gail Sundell, another GU grad. It has also been meaningful to me to pull some weeds and writing and praying for the Holy Spirit to nourish my soul! Yes, Roy Cheville, another GU grad, was one of the finest Spiritual artisans I have ever known. This "grad business" is kind of quaint. Yes, I enjoyed pulling some weeds from the rocky, artistically designed walk and what is more, I will enjoy keeping up the stewardship!!



Retreat 2009



(Camp Doniphan 2009 Continued from page 1)

how I have grown," more reflective and positive. Saturday afternoon Mike and I had an opportunity to walk around the grounds. We found it so peaceful and enjoyable watching everyone. People were in canoes, paddle boats, meditating on a hillside, walking, reading, or studying. All of this activity however did not detour people from participating in the "GALA Olympics." What fun, the kind I like, it doesn't require much physical ability. Everyone came out a winner, and in my book, that made it great! We could not have asked for a better day, the sun and warmth was perfect. Later that evening we had a fireside chat with Steve & Cathi Veazey.

Steve was very upfront, encouraged dialogue and questions, and answered each person's question with frankness and respect. It was a very good conversation. The Evening was then completed by "GAY BINGO." If you have never tried "Gay Bingo" then you are missing a real treat. Gladys Over (Nathan Phillips) hosted bingo which included prizes and even a dance with Gladys and Steve. It was such fun! After bingo people retired, continued in conversation or began playing games.

Sunday we spent the morning session with Steve and Cathi discussing the "We Share" document that the church has provided. This document helps to define where and what we are as a church. Please feel free to go online, at the church website, and download this document. We finished up our session with Steve and Cathi with additional question time and a wonderful performance by the GALA choir. The performance was truly touching. Thank you, Larry, and choir. The next session was spent on strategies for conference. This session taught us that we must submit resolutions, become delegates from our mission centers and vote in legislative sessions during World Conference. This is the conference where we must be heard. We need to be present in our congregations, in other words it's time to come out of the house and go to church. After lunch we had more free time, allowing for people to go boating,

swimming, walking or time for meditating. But the big event was lurking just around the corner, THE PINK PARTY followed by the ANNUAL TALENT SHOW. I know it took some time for our members to be prepared in their special outfits and make up (more on the guys than the ladies, go figure). Oh, what a sea of pink! We all sat down and shared our evening meal together roast beef, potato cubes stir fried to perfection, baby carrots, with just the right amount of sweetness and seasoning. The talent show was to die for, with many acts including Skip Frizzell singing an opera! Ha! There were piano duets by Mark & Peter, and an appearance from the unknown grandma! Even Mike and I preformed "Sisters" in our pink formal gowns. There were many more great performances. I could keep going for another paragraph. The evening ended with games, conversation, or for some of us, a immediate crash and sleep. What a day!!!!

Monday we were again led in devotions by David. As always, good things must come to an end. With friendships renewed and spirits strengthened, we gathered for our closing service. The service opened with a hymn sing and then some final words. We then shared in the Lord's Supper, and the choir sang a beautiful song. We closed with prayers for Conference 2010, for those unable to attend and for safe journeys home.

I think a big thank you go to, the entire GALA Board and spouses, Mark Dixon, Todd Davidson and Kip Dawson. I hope that I have not missed anyone, if so, know you are in all of our thoughts. Thanks, for a great weekend. See you next year!





STONEWALL



An Open and Affirming Ministry of Norton Heights Congregation

Community of Christ

For the first time in years, there is a Community of Christ ministry in Kansas City specifically designed to serve the needs of the gay community. According to Velton Peabody, Stonewall began regular, weekly public services at 7:30 p.m. on Sunday evening, November 1, as an open and affirming ministry of Norton Heights Community of Christ, 436 South Norton Avenue, Kansas City, Mo.

"I know we are not truly pioneers in bringing this kind of ministry in Kansas City. More than a decade ago, there was a similar Community of Christ ministry known as Peace Chapel that met Sunday mornings in downtown Kansas City under the leadership of Arthur Butler," Peabody said. "Today, there are several congregations representing a number of denominations, especially in the downtown and midtown areas, that are fully open and welcoming to LGBT people."

Stonewall differs in a number of ways. Since Stonewall meets on Sunday evenings, it will not compete with traditional Sunday morning worship offered in other Community of Christ congregations in the area. Participants in Stonewall are encouraged to continue present activity with other churches and participate in the new ministry as often as they wish.

Another significant difference is that Stonewall does not function as a congregation in the traditional sense, but as a ministry within a congregation. The sponsoring congregation will continue to worship as usual on Sunday mornings and conduct other outreach ministries, like its work with the homeless, on other days. Members of the Stonewall ministry team expect to remain active in their congregations as well as Stonewall.

According to Norton Heights Pastor Janet Dellinger, Stonewall was created to provide a safe and welcoming place for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons and their advocates to meet for worship, study and fellowship. The ministry's mission statement says services will be open to all, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, race, socio-economic status, religious affiliation or family structure.

Besides Peabody, team members are Leon Berg, Doug Rottering and Eduardo Villarreal, members of the Norton Heights congregation, as well as Pastor Dellinger and Peter Judd, representing the pastorate, and Donny O'Bryan, a friend from the Northeast community. In addition, Arthur Butler, now a member of Stone Church Community of Christ in Independence, is working with the Stonewall ministry team in planning and conducting services. The team will be expanded as the ministry unfolds.

"We are pleased to have a strong GALA presence in the area," Peabody said. "I have attended GALA functions this year that drew as many as 30 persons. These activities meet an important social need of the LGBT community. We expect to cooperate fully with GALA. Personally, I look forward to continued participation in GALA activities and we expect to promote these activities through announcements in our weekly bulletins."

While Stonewall worship, education and fellowship will be designed with the needs of the Community of Christ LGBT community in mind, its activities will be open to all.

Dr. Dale Luffman, a member of the Community of Christ Quorum of Twelve Apostles, delivered the sermon at the inaugural service November 1 on the subject of hospitality with references to Genesis and Mark. He explained the historical context of the time in which Genesis was written. He challenged those who use the Sodom and Gomorrah event as a way to attack homosexuals and other members of the LGBT community. He asserted that the Lot story is about God's hospitality, not about committed same-sex relationships in today's world.

Music ministry was provided by pianist/guitarist Cindy Towers, the family of Gayle and Joyce Humphrey, and Doug Rottering.

For more information about Stonewall, contact Velton Peabody at 816-547-2805, misterpeabody@comcast.net, or search facebook for Stonewall.



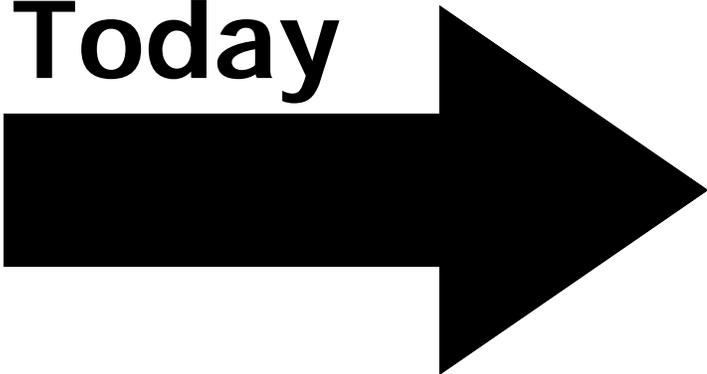
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