



gala news

THE LETTER

Serving members and friends of the
Community of Christ

February 2009
Volume 20 Issue 1



Members of the GALA and WCN Executive Boards at the Temple. Standing: Clyde Frey, David Howard, Chuck Hewitt, Patti Danielson, David Woosley, Anita Bradshaw, Sam Marmoy, Meredith Bischoff; kneeling: Allan Fiscus, Arthur Butler, Lauren Hall.

New Procedure for GALA Dues

The GALA Executive Board has implemented a new procedure for annual dues. Instead of dues covering the period between annual retreats, they will cover a calendar year and be due on January 1. By now, members should have received an invoice for 2009. If you have not received an invoice, please contact Clyde Frey, Secretary, to confirm that we have your correct address.

In addition, there is an area on the invoice to indicate if you are willing to receive this newsletter and other communications by e-mail. This will help us reduce our costs for mailing.

See Inside:

- 2009 Retreat
- Executive Board Retreat
- Testimony of Chuck and Mike Hewitt
- World Church Leadership Visits
- Request For Hymns

GALA

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President Veazey at 2009 GALA Retreat

The GALA retreat for 2009 will be held Labor Day weekend at Camp Doniphan, just north of Independence Missouri. The theme for the retreat is WE SHARE A MISSION. President Steve Veazey will be the guest minister for the weekend and will participate with us in worship, a question and answer session and share about the Community of Christ's guiding principle's document. He will share for the entire weekend in the ministry of presence.

Anita Bradshaw, consultant for the Welcoming Community Network will also share with us in strategies for the lead-up to the 2010 World Conference. Additional ministry will be provided by Poul Wilson of the Community of Christ Youth Ministries Department. He will focus on the 15 to 30 year-olds in attendance.

Many of you have attended camps and retreats at Doniphan. Cost of the retreat will be \$175 per person. This includes all meals, private accommodations, with most rooms including full bath rooms, bed linens and towels and use of the facilities. The cost represents an increase over previous years. Scholarships are available depending on the demand. Private donations are welcomed to cover the costs of the facilities and other campers. Carpooling is encouraged. Activities will begin on Friday evening at 7:00 with the return of Gladys Over for a fun night of bingo and will conclude with the closing worship at noon on Monday. Please make your travel plans accordingly so you can enjoy the full fellowship of the retreat.

Please plan to attend this opportunity for fellowship, spiritual uplift and renewal of friendships and self. It will make a difference in your life!

Executive Board Retreat

The GALA Board met in retreat on January 16–19 in Independence Missouri. Eight of the nine members were present. The weekend was filled with activities including visits with World Church leadership, a pot luck sponsored by the Kansas City GALA group (attended by over 50 friends and allies), a worship service in the Temple chapel organized by the Welcoming Community Network (WCN) with 43 in attendance and a lot of fellowship.

Friday evening the Board met for dinner and brought new members up-to-date on the reason GALA was started and it's history since inception. The book project, *Homosexual Saints*, was discussed as well as roles and expectations of Board members.

Saturday morning started off early with breakfast at Cornerstone Community of Christ prepared by Mike and Chuck Hewitt. The day was packed with a full agenda that by 4:00 had everyone exhausted. However a lot was accomplished, great discussion was had, and the Board bonded together with a commonality of purpose and vision. Discussion centered on the following items:

1. A portion of funds in the checking account will be invested in a higher yielding savings account.

2. The 2009 retreat was discussed at length; a new area of focus will be directed towards those aged 15-30; and World Church staff members will be invited.

3. After the 2010 World Conference, retreats will return to the coasts to increase opportunities for participation; the 2010 retreat will be in Wichita, KS and in 2011 we hope to hold two retreats, one in the Spring and one over Labor Day.

4. GALA will pursue several items with respect to the 2010 World Conference including booth space and including the Rainbow Flag in

the procession, as well as plantings in front of the Temple in 2009.

5. GALA will submit "inclusive" hymns for possible inclusion in the new hymnal.

6. Allan Fiscus and Drew Chestnut will investigate a re-do to the website; if you have ideas, please contact Allan as soon as possible.

7. The Board would like to update the logo with a rainbow instead of pink background and more definition to the dove in anticipation of procuring lapel pins, shirts and other merchandise.

8. The by-laws will be extensively reviewed for any necessary changes.

9. Clyde Frey and Sandra Merth will update our brochure for distribution to all congregations in the United States, Canada, Australia and Europe.

10. Distribution of the newsletter to an expanded Temple staff and to all Mission Centers as a beacon of ministry throughout the Church.

If you have any questions about any of these discussion points, please contact David Howard at howard092248@yahoo.com or 216-712-7218.

In addition, the first meeting of the joint GALA/WCN Task Force for the planning of activities for the 2010 World Conference convened, facilitated by Anita Bradshaw. Poul Wilson, Meredith Bischoff, Pat Marmoy, Chuck Hewitt, Allan Fiscus and David Howard are on the committee. They will identify focus areas for planning and invite anyone willing to participate to get involved. The areas include presence, worship, hospitality, advocacy, education & information and the care of the volunteers. We need many people helping with this endeavor. Please volunteer by contacting David Howard.

www.galaweb.org

Be A Part Of Your Congregation

This is the testimony of Chuck and Mike Hewitt from Independence, MO which tells how being part of a congregation can make a difference.

When we moved to Independence, we were attending Peace Chapel congregation in downtown Kansas City. Peace Chapel was a congregation of many GLTB members so it was very "comfortable". Peace Chapel had been a large part of our lives and for a while we commuted the distance from Independence. After some careful thought and prayer, the two of us decided that, if we were truly going to help the Community of Christ to move forward with the GLTB issues, we were going to have to start attending a congregation where we weren't "so comfortable". So, we began shopping for a congregation, a concept that can only be found here in Independence, where there are so many Community of Christ congregations. After attending several congregations we walked into Cornerstone Community of Christ and never stopped attending. We were greeted at the door, and basically were never allowed to leave after that point. By the next Sunday we were asked to help with Outreach Ministries and started attending meetings. We became involved over the next year with the inner workings of the congregation volunteering wherever and whenever needed. Please keep in mind that at no time did we walk in the door, announce that we were gay and that they had to accept us. We were

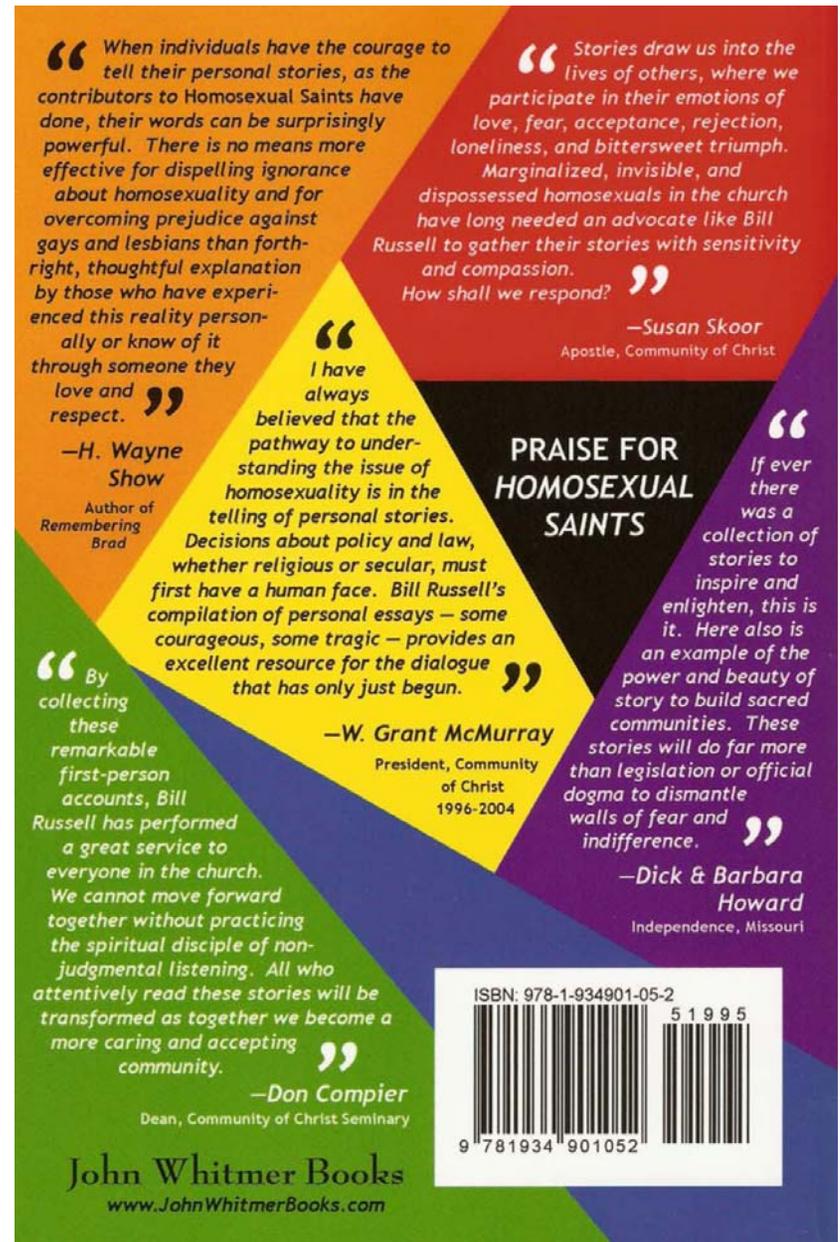
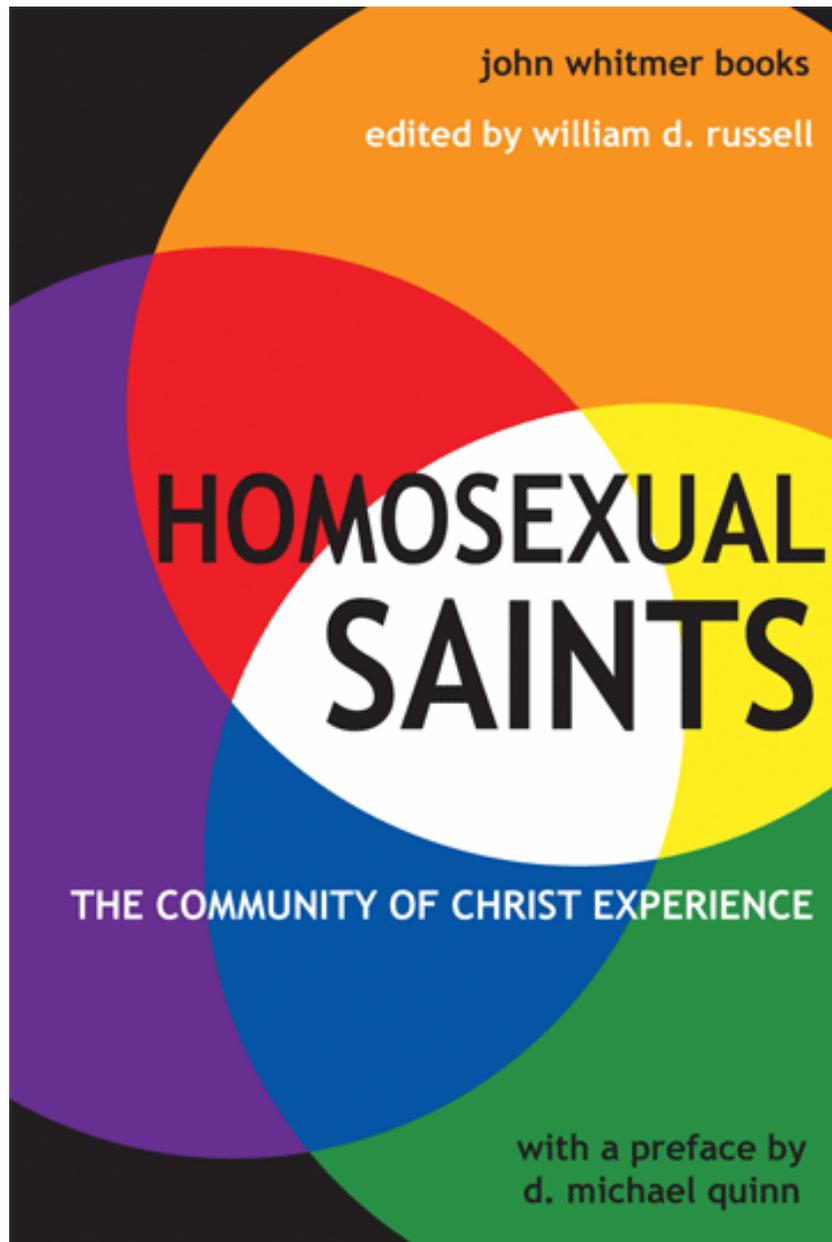
just ourselves and put our arms around each other during services. We allowed ourselves to get to know people and for them to also get to know us.

After attending for a year or so we found ourselves in charge of worship, teaching Sunday school and teaching at Vacation Bible School. We were preparing several fundraiser meals as well as starting Cornerstone's neighborhood Thanksgiving dinner. The Thanksgiving dinner is now an annual event, we prepare the food and the congregation does the rest. We now are serving an average of 250 plates of food each year to the neighbors and those in need.



Not long after our second year, one of the older members in the congregation pulled the two of us aside wanting to let us know how much we had changed him and his understanding of gay people. He had no idea that gay couples were just like any other couples, until he met the

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ORDERING INFORMATION AT: WWW.GALAWEB.ORG

GALA HAS THEM IN STOCK FOR IMMEDIATE DELIVERY!

Chapter News

Independence-Kansas City

Members of the Independence-Kansas City Chapter of GALA recently met to plan activities for 2009; the following schedule was established:

February 21—8:30PM Bowling at Independence Lanes

March 21—Green Party at Corey Wallace's

April 18—1:00PM GALA is in charge of the Prayer for Peace Service in the Temple

April 18th BBQ @ Pam & Kristin's

May 15-17—Camping at Watkins Mill; Saturday night dinner and campfire for everyone (non campers come up for the day)

June 5-7—GAY Pride (march in parade and have booth)

June 7—1:00PM GALA is in charge of the Prayer for Peace Service in the Temple

July 15—1:00PM GALA is in charge of the Prayer for Peace Service in the Temple

July 18—Miniature Golf tournament and dinner

August 15—Party; place TBA

September 4-7—GALA Retreat Labor Day Weekend at Camp Doniphan Cost will be \$150.00 per person for early registration; that figures out to be \$25.00 a month beginning with February so plan ahead.

October 14—1:00PM GALA is in charge of the Prayer for Peace Service in the Temple

October 17—Halloween Party

November 21—Pot luck planning party for 2010 events

December 19—Christmas Party at Arthur Butler's

In addition, a new information line has been established. Feel free to send an e-mail to galainfoline@gmail.com for prayer requests, special activities or if you need general information about upcoming activities and events.

Lawrence

The Lawrence Chapter continues to meet monthly for a "movie" night. We met February 14 at the home of Terry Mitchell and enjoyed the movie version of **MAMMA MIA!** We don't have a consistent day of the month, we just try to fit into everyone's schedule. The March event has not been set yet, but we hope that John and Cricket Mercer are able to re-join us soon!

For more information, contact David Woosley at dwoosley@sbcglobal.net.

Southern California

This Spring, family and friends in Southern California are looking forward to gathering once again for the annual Passover Seder. This evening event is filled with recounting of the Jews exodus from slavery to freedom, dining with special foods related to the rituals, and sharing our own strivings for liberation and acceptance. Watch for an upcoming announcement with date, time and location.

For more information, contact Meredith Bischoff at merigrll@merigrll.com.

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two of us. This was a very moving moment. We made a difference by just being ourselves and present in the congregation.

After two years in worship, we moved our attention to Outreach ministries where we have been involved ever since. Our Outreach has been focusing on welcoming and greeting all people. We added to the congregational welcoming statement that all are welcome regardless of sexual orientation. Last year Mike and I attended the Welcoming Community Network training which was very informative and gave us a great direction to focus on how to help Cornerstone become a truly "Welcoming" congregation. When we found out that there was going to be a WCN training session offered in Independence, we volunteered Cornerstone for the training location. Six people from our congregation attended the training. The "Shower of Stoles" project was also on display and the book *Homosexual Saints* was made available to the congregation. A few weeks later we had 40 members attend the Peace Colloquy with the focus being on becoming a Signal Community. Cornerstone is working at becoming a Signal Community with a discernment process on being welcoming to all including GLBT persons.

Becoming a member of Cornerstone has been one of the best growing experiences for the two of us, but also for the congregation as well. The love we have for every member of the congregation and the love they give us is

more that we can ask for. It just goes to show, that by being present, getting involved, and sticking to it, can make a difference. The road wasn't always easy and we still have our struggles. But by taking a chance, putting ourselves out there, everyone got a chance to grow. A recent email from a woman in the congregation gave us the greatest compliment of all;

"I WANT TO THANK YOU BOTH FOR DOING SO MUCH WORK AROUND THE CHURCH AND NEIGHBORHOOD. YOU ARE A GOOD EXAMPLE OF A HOW WE ALL SHOULD ACT."

We have been deliberate and prayerful in our adventure with the Cornerstone congregation. We look forward to the never ending journey before us, growing, and helping other congregations truly become a community of Christ.

World Church Leadership Visits

During the weekend of the GALA retreat David Howard and Allan Fiscus had the opportunity to visit with President Becky Savage, Wim Van Klinken, Sandee Gamet, and Lauren Hall. These visits were a continuation of the relationship building process.

Request For Hymns

You may already know that the Community of Christ is in the process of compiling hymns for a new hymnal that should be released sometime in 2011. GALA has been asked to submit hymns for this publication. The hymns should be "inclusive" in their wording. They may be new compositions or currently in use elsewhere. We are especially interested in hymns that are GLBT friendly which would speak spiritually to the members and allies of GALA.

If you have hymns you would like to submit, please send them to: Larry Pickering at: pipes61@aol.com, or by mail at: 13506 W. Hayden St., Wichita, KS 67235. Larry will complete the submission process for you.

Thank you for your help in this endeavor!

More information about the Community of Christ Hymnal Project can be found at www.cofchrist.org/hymnal.



February 2009

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ADDRESS SERVICE
REQUESTED