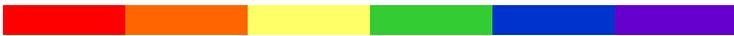




# galanews

THE  LETTER

Serving members and friends of  
Community of Christ

February 2015  
Volume 26 Issue 1

## Annual GALA Board Retreat

by Lisa Meyer, Treasurer

The GALA board retreat held in Washington, D.C. this year was an amazing experience for me. The Washington, D.C. congregation is a beautiful congregation and building located very near the National Cathedral. I have always loved the city of Washington, D.C. I am a history and politics buff, which makes this area a big draw for me. On our long drive to the GALA board retreat, we received news that the Supreme Court had agreed to hear an appeal of the court decision regarding the gay marriage cases from Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee. Since we live in Michigan, this case has particular significance for us, as well as the entire marriage movement. It was surreal as we drove into Supreme Court territory while hearing this news. In addition, it was very meaningful to us to drive through the state of Maryland, where we were legally married in August.

The GALA experience is different for everyone, but for me, it has been a source of support and grace when I didn't have other supports available. It is easy to feel alone as a lesbian in a rural area in Michigan. It is even more difficult to be gay and Christian. You may find support in the gay community, or you may find support in the Christian community, but it can be very difficult to be both. GALA is the organization that allows you to be both gay and Christian, and supports you in the process.



The GALA board got some great work done over the board retreat. We are working hard to make our organization responsive and full of ministry. We want you to know that you are not alone. We are forming community—and community can mean the world.

by Jerry Dale Jr, Member-at-Large

Hosting the 2015 Board Retreat in Washington, DC was a real joy. I have been actively involved in the DC congregation for the last 2 years and the congregation was enthusiastic to host us and to have us lead the Sunday service.

The work that we accomplished will serve the organization well into our future. There was a lot of discussion about the future of GALA and our relevance in the church. You will be receiving an email with a survey that we hope you take the time to complete. This survey will ask you about what we are doing well, what can we do better and gauge your support of our new Vision and Mission statements.



I am so proud to serve on the board of GALA and I am, as an at-large member, here to ensure that your voices are heard. This organization is for you, so please let us know how we can serve you better.

# GALA

## Executive Board

**Clyde Phillips-Frey**  
**President**

clydefrey@gmail.com

**Erin Cavanaugh**  
**Vice President**

**Affiliate Development and  
Supervision**

ercavana@gmail.com

**Saundra Merth**  
**Past - President**

smerth\_coc@yahoo.com

**Stephen Donahoe - Secretary**

sjdonahoe@gmail.com

**Position Open -  
Under Secretary for  
Publications**

**Lisa Meyer - Treasurer**

lisameyer1975@yahoo.com

### Members At Large:

**Nathan Phillips-Frey**

NateP617@aol.com

**Jerry Dale**

jerrydalejr@gmail.com

**Dave Brosh - Hansen**

davidbrosh@ymail.com

**Visit us on the web -  
www.galaweb.org**

We look forward to receiving dues for the new year 2015 (\$25/person or \$40/family) and any donations great or small sent to the

GALA post office box:

PO Box 146, Lapeer MI 48446

# President's Message

*Clyde Phillips-Frey, GALA President*

Since the conclusion of the US National Conference, there has been a time of preparation and waiting as the interim policies for the US were developed relative to priesthood calls of homosexual persons along with recognition and performance of same-sex marriages in US states in which it is legal and commitment services in US states in which it is yet to become legal. The waiting is over. The interim policy was put into effect at the end of March.

I sat in the Auditorium chamber as a delegate and listened to all of the people that spoke to the issues. I felt the movement of the Spirit. Watching the voting results come up on the screen, the years of hurt washed away. I now felt the hurt that others exhibited as a prayer was offered for everyone present and I asked in my heart that we could be united.

So, imagine my puzzled expression when I heard, "Well, GALA's work is done." I just sort of laughed a little and thought, "Seriously! Done? I believe this is the starting point that we've been trying to reach for a very long time!" For there are many that identify as lesbian, gay, transgender, or bisexual that have indeed waited a very long time to get to this point. There are many folks that have given up and moved on. We are those that have seen the light at the end of the tunnel and remain consciously willing to expend our time, energy, gifts and talents, so that our voices can be heard and the ministry we have to offer can be received with open hearts by everyone! We are looking to minister to the bruised and brokenhearted whether they are those of us that continue to suffer discrimination or whether they are those whose shadows fall across our door tomorrow, next week or next year seeking healing. We have gifts and talents that have been pushed to the back burner or put out on the back porch that can now be brought into the light and lovingly gifted to those in need. Now is the time to move forward, hand-in-hand, to build bridges of understanding, to open avenues of ministry, to share the stories of our lives touched by a God who truly loves everyone and wants us to love one another.

Where do we go now? In the year ahead, there will be time for each of us to become involved deeper in our local congregations, Mission Center family camps (sometimes called reunions), and Mission Center Conferences; the grass roots kinds of things that provide small group settings as well as one-on-one type of ministry opportunities. We will also have the opportunity to share in expanded ways at the Annual GALA Retreat as we encourage those that need support as well as those that can share how their ministry has been a blessing to others.

In response to "What do you want to see happen in GALA in the year ahead?" I find myself saying, "I want to see us move forward, hand-in-hand, with our friends, families, neighbors, allies, in finding ways to minister to each other while gathering everyone into the fold that is represented by the congregations of Community of Christ so we may share our stories, and learn to love as we have been called to do." It is about getting along. It is about sharing love. It is about living into our individual and corporate calls.

*President's Message continued on the next page -*

# galanews



“Hand in Hand – We are One” the theme for the 2015 GALA Labor Day Retreat, September 4 – 7, that will be held in Blue Water Community of Christ Campgrounds is in Lexington, MI on Lake Huron. The Retreat Committee will be providing the specifics for the annual event in the near future and publication for the event shall begin before too much longer. Begin saving now so when the late summer event arrives, you will be ready to head to Michigan to share in the fellowship!

The GALA Board met in Washington DC for a planning Retreat as we looked ahead into 2015 – 2016. During our discussions and brainstorming, the group developed a vision statement, a proposed mission statement, and decided to ask the membership to indicate their level of support. A short survey will be going to the membership, so please take a moment to respond. In the membership response, we will be listening to what it is you, the member, think we need to be about.

## GALA Remembers -

We lost a dear advocate this December- Forrest Swall. Forrest was a tireless activist for peace, justice and equality. He was a terrific ally for the LGBTQ community and a long-standing member of GALA. Personally, I will treasure memories of talking with him over meals at our annual GALA retreat. He had so much wisdom and compassion to share with everyone he met. Clearly he held a deep concern for ensuring that every LGBTQ person knew that they were valued. GALA was also a very high priority for Forrest. This is exemplified by the fact that he drove their “Mothership” RV to Arizona for our most recent retreat, despite his health problems. He had recently crashed his bicycle and was pretty banged up, but I would have never guessed that this would have been his last GALA retreat. He was so full of energy and was always concerned first and foremost of other people’s wellbeing. Please continue to hold Donna, Forrest’s wife of 58 years, and the rest of their family in your thoughts and prayers. Let us treasure the fond memories of times spent with Forrest and honor his legacy by continuing his work for equality and justice for all.

**The GALA Board welcomes as our chaplain for 2015 – 2016, Nancy Cervi!** Nancy has been an active member of Community of Christ since she was 18 years old. Early activity with friends drew her to the fellowship. Nancy and her late husband Larry were the couple that lovingly encouraged Nathan Phillips-Frey to open up his life and become involved in Community of Christ. Her home was always open to everyone to come and share with each other and there were many times when folks met to share a meal or plan an event for church. Nancy was the author of the Buffalo-Clarence story that appeared in Touched by Grace. Nancy presided over a “blessing of the rings” ceremony in a Cheektowaga NY back yard the weekend before several couples were legally married in Niagara Falls State Park in New York State and she was present to witness the official ceremony. She also served on the Pastoral Team in the Buffalo-Clarence Congregation and was instrumental in hosting the Historic Sites Tours in October where the tourists were doused in Buffalo Style hospitality and foods. Nancy was ordained in 2006 to the office of Evangelist and has served in a variety of administrative rolls over the years. **Welcome Nancy!**

### Will YOU answer the call?

The GALA Nominations Committee with Stephen Donahoe as Chairperson, Nathan Phillips-Frey, Lisa Meyer, Cindy Campbell and Kip Dawson seek candidates that will stand for election this year and begin serving in 2016.

- President-elect (serves 2016, becomes President 2017-2018, Immediate Past President 2019)
- Vice President (2016-2017)
- Undersecretary for Publications (2016-2017)
- Member-At-Large (2016-2018)

### Treasurer’s Report

Total Income for 2014:

\$11,268.22

Total Expenses for 2014:

\$9,163.86

Checking Account Balance as of 12/31/2014:

\$15,851.59



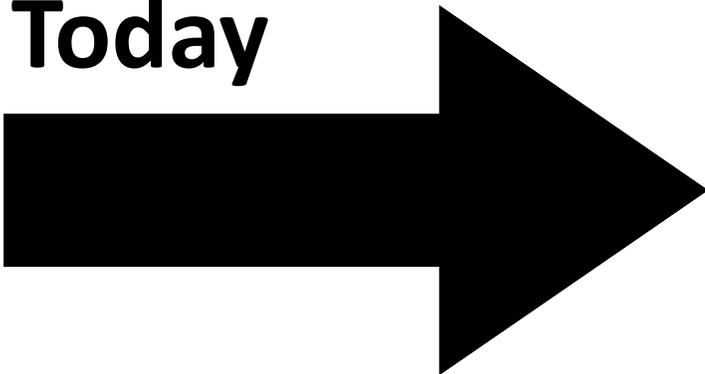
February 2015

P.O. Box 146  
Lapeer, MI 48446

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# Join, or Renew Your Membership Today



## 2015 GALA Membership

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

YES; send me the newsletter by e-mail

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

### Membership Level (U.S. dollars):

Individual(\$25)       Family(\$40)

Limited Income(\$10)

I would like to make an additional contribution to advance GALA's outreach and educational goals:

\$50     \$100     \$200 or \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*Contributions to GALA are tax deductible.*

Please return to: **P.O. Box 146**  
**Lapeer, MI 48446**