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THE  LETTER

Serving members and friends of
Community of Christ

May 2016
Volume 28 Issue 2

2016 GALA RETREAT

The 2016 GALA retreat will return to Camp Doniphan over Labor Day weekend (September 2-5). This will be a reunion retreat that we hope will reconnect us with many LGBTQ people and allies who, for various reasons, have stepped away from GALA and Community of Christ.



Robin Linkhart, who will be ordained an apostle at the 2016 World Conference, will be our guest minister.

The challenge is that this space is very expensive. Even using the overage from last year's retreat of \$1600 to lower the registration cost, it will still cost \$250 per person to register. We know that is too much for many people who would like to attend. So...

We would like to raise enough money so that we can provide ample scholarships for people who truly cannot afford to pay the registration fee **and** lower the registration cost to \$175 per person.

As we are planning for the event, we are aiming for 60 attendees. In order to lower the registration to \$175, that means we need to raise \$6,000. This is a big goal—but it is also a worthy goal and one we can achieve.

Every LGBTQ person or ally who wants to attend the 30th anniversary GALA retreat should have the opportunity to do so. **Will you search your heart to decide how much you can give to help us enable many more people to have the transformative opportunity of sharing their story—perhaps for the first time—surrounded by this loving community?**

The registration form for the retreat is on page 7 of this newsletter and also online at <http://galaweb.org/2016%20retreat%20registration.pdf>

Please take time to fill it out so that we can know many to plan on—and consider making an added donation to assist others to come to this special time of sharing together.



ARE YOU WILLING?

GALA is seeking board members... Hey, you! Yes, YOU! We need YOU to join the board of directors. 3-year terms are now available (we ask you to join us for 1 hour/month and one board retreat/year)! What a steal! Positions are going fast. E-mail Jerry Dale at jerrydalejr@gmail.com to get your board position today! (If you don't volunteer, Jerry may have to call you...and no one wants that!)

GALA

Executive Board

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ercavana@gmail.com

**Jerry Dale
President-Elect**
jerrydalejr@gmail.com

**Stephen Donahoe
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Members At Large:

Dan Gregory
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David Brosh-Hansen
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Visit us on the web

www.galaweb.org

President's Message

Erin Cavanaugh, GALA President



Hi everyone! World Conference is right around the corner, and GALA has been busy ensuring that there is a voice representing you. Both the church and GALA have seen a lot of changes in the past year. It has never been more important to make sure that people know that God loves them just as they are, yet loves them too much to leave them that way! Growth, both personally and in community, is the only way for us to reach our goals and meet our mission. We HAVE a place at the table, and we encourage each and every one of you to step up and claim your place. Change is hard, and growing pains hurt, but they are necessary for us to grow into the community we are meant to be. For those of you who will be at conference, whether for a day or for the week, we would love to see you at the GALA events outlined here and publicized more as time gets closer. For those of you who are unable to attend, please help by uplifting the conference and GALA in your prayers. Please join us for the conference call, World Conference, annual retreat, or any other opportunity that fits into your needs and your schedule—we need each other to remain strong, and our community is only as strong as our weakest link. We are one in Christ!



MEET BRITTANY MANGELSON, MEMBER AT LARGE



Brittany Mangelson was born and raised in Utah and she is a recent convert to Community of Christ. In the Salt Lake congregation, she has served as the Community Building Chair and is currently on the Peace Justice and Worship Planning Teams and serves as a priest. She is the mother of 3, wife to Josh and the two of them are hosts on the Project ZION podcast. Brittany has a bachelor's degree in sociology and is planning on starting Seminary at Graceland this fall. She loves Community of Christ and especially appreciates the enduring principles Unity in Diversity and All Are Called. She is excited for the Salt Lake congregation to be involved with GALA. She is excited to learn about being a better ally and hopes her congregation can continue to be a welcoming, inviting, and safe place for people on their journey.

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TREASURER'S REPORT

by Lisa Meyer, Treasurer

Hi everyone, and welcome to your regularly scheduled Treasurer's Report! I want to give everyone an update as to where we are financially for the year to date. The income recorded for GALA through the end of April was \$6,982.58. This was primarily due to memberships renewed and donations received, both towards the organization in general as well as to our Retreat fundraising effort, which I will talk about more later in this article. It is important to remember that almost \$2000 of that income was donated "in-kind" from Board members in their travel and expenses related to Board Retreat. Due to those in-kind donations, the Board retreat came in significantly under budget, at a cost of \$245.45 rather than the budgeted costs of \$1500.00.

We do have one line item from the budget that was significantly overspent at this point in the year. That line item is "administrative expenses", and the overspend is approximately \$450, or 250% of the line item budget. The reason for this was the decision to "snail mail" a request for membership renewal and/or retreat donations. This decision was made due to the fact that for the past several years, membership renewal was requested solely via e-mail, and the board was unsure whether a regular postage request would increase donations. That information will be analyzed and used for decision making related to next year. Please give us feedback as to whether that was an effective use of funds.

The fundraising effort for assistance with the upcoming GALA retreat at Camp Doniphan in Excelsior Springs, Missouri, has been underway. The goal of the effort was to raise \$6000 prior to the start of the retreat, and to date, a little over \$2000 has been raised towards this effort. The organization will soon be increasing our fundraising efforts, after a pause due to the World Church financial difficulties. If you are willing and able to donate toward the Retreat efforts, please go to our website (www.galaweb.org) and donate via PayPal or send a check with the memo of Retreat donations to GALA at PO Box 146 Lapeer, MI 48446.

GALA and WCN AT WORLD CONFERENCE

by Jerry M. Dale, Jr.

As World Conference is closing in, so is the planning for GALA and WCN activities. Here is what we know:

- GALA and WCN will share a table in the Celebration Village.

We need your help to be the face of GALA. If you will be attending Conference the first weekend (Friday, Saturday, and Sunday), please email Jerry Dale at jerrydalejr@gmail.com so that we can get a schedule together. The schedule varies day to day.

- On Monday, June 6 at 12:30 p.m., WCN will be hosting a Lunch and Learn to talk about the WCN process. We will be at the Auditorium North Conference Room. Come join us to learn more about WCN or to share your WCN experience.
- On Wednesday, June 8 at 12:30 p.m., GALA will host a worship service at Open Arms Community of Christ (a short drive from Conference activities). Address is 1021 W. College, Independence MO 64050. An offering will be collected. WCN will also be passing out t-shirts at this service to be worn to the Hymn Festival on Friday evening.

We are super excited to see everyone and ask that those who are not able to attend hold us in their thoughts and prayers.



MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Please take a few minutes to renew your GALA membership or to join for the first time! A membership renewal form is available on the back page of this newsletter, or you can join online at <http://www.galaweb.org/membership5b.html>



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THE POWER OF THE PEN

A Story of the Role Community of Christ Played During the
17 Days of Marriage in Utah

by Mark Trujillo

I do not believe, even as my memory fades, that I will ever forget the feelings the surged through my soul as we heard the news that Utah's draconian *Amendment 3* had been over-turned, and hundreds of gay couples were queuing-up at the Salt Lake County Center to obtain marriage licenses. We got in the car and raced downtown to be witnesses to an historic moment. Because the line was so long, the County Clerk's Office stayed open past closing time in an attempt to get marriage licenses issued. Eventually, amid protests, the issuing stopped for the evening. It was Friday and we were afraid of what could happen by Monday.

On Saturday morning, December 21st, there was a rumor that the Weber Center in Ogden would open to issue marriage licenses. When we arrived in Ogden, there was a line of people that snaked down four levels of ramps in the parking structure and out into the December snow. After over three hours of waiting, it was announced that the County Attorney had advised the County Clerk not to open the courthouse on a Saturday. My heart nearly broke as a young girl began to cry and said to her two mothers, "Does this mean our family doesn't get to get married today?"

Area clergy who were volunteering to perform marriages held a strategy meeting on Sunday for Monday morning. We fully expected that there would be a halt on marriages at some point on Monday, and our strategy was to get as many "I do's" done before a stop was put on our "day-and-a-half of justice." Community of Christ had not yet implemented the results of the USA National Conference and I was a little unsure of the role I would play. We decided to run-off the marriage license applications ahead of time, so that people would have them completed as they got to the clerk's counter.

As I prepared for Monday morning, I thought it would be a good idea to also have pens for all those in line. As I was getting ready to go and buy some pens I remembered that

there were BOXES & BOXES of pens in the Library at the Community of Christ building in Salt Lake City. Robin Linkhart and I had discovered them when doing some re-arranging in the library. It had stuck in my mind because there were so many and we had wondered why so many had been purchased. They were delightful little pens that had the Peace Seal and Community of Christ logo on them. I ran down to the church to get them. When I arrived, I realized I had forgotten my church keys and so I broke into the church and got scores of the little pens. On Monday morning, we were very organized, including having "marriage stations" set-up for couples to exchange their vows. My job was to keep all the licenses together with a member of the Ogden City Council so that if a stop was enforced, we could make sure the ceremonies performed would be recorded.

We ended-up with 17 days of justice. Here, we call it "The Marriage Miracle." Thousands of gay couples, some of them who had been together for over twenty years were married. Even when the order to stop came in early January, there was a certain confidence among our people.

We had experienced justice and equality and there is no way it would ever be the same again. Several hundred couples were married on that Monday in Ogden. They were married by clergy from a dozen different denominations. But they all had one thing in common. They went home with a souvenir Community of Christ pen that they will keep and cherish for the rest of their lives. And the little girl? I sent her home with five pens when she returned with her Mums on Monday morning so that her family could be married!

Even though representatives from Community of Christ were not able to perform any of the ceremonies and I had not yet been ordained an Elder, we were an important presence in a vital ministering of justice. I grew-up hearing "the power of the pen is mightier than the sword." On "Marriage Monday" in Ogden, Utah, the presence of Community of Christ brought new meaning to that beautiful old proverb.



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WELCOMING COMMUNITY NETWORK (WCN) CORNER

by Jerry M. Dale, Jr.

WCN would like to recognize the great work of the Ogden, Utah and the Salt Lake City, Utah congregations for becoming Welcoming Community Network congregations. If you would like to learn more about how to become a welcoming congregation, visit our website at www.welcomingcommunitynetwork.org or email info@welcomingcommunitynetwork.org.



SHOPPING AT AMAZON

You can support GALA when you shop on amazon.com! Log in to amazon.com/smile and select "Gala Gay and Lesbian Acceptance Inc." and a portion of your purchase will be donated to our organization.



TEMPLE PLANTERS

As GALA has done for the past several years, we provided both the plants and the people-power to fill the planters at the Temple with beautiful flowers! We also again have signs in several of the pots, giving credit to GALA for this ministry.



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Come to the Table 30-year Anniversary of GALA

GALA RETREAT 2016

REGISTRATION FORM

September 2-5, 2016

Lake Doniphan Conference and Retreat Center

12856 Doniphan Lake Road

Excelsior Springs, MO 64024

Robin Linkhart, apostle-designate, Guest Ministry

Please complete this form and return it by August 17 so we can give Doniphan an accurate count.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (_____) E-mail _____

Special Dietary Needs _____

Medical/Special Needs _____

Roommate Preference _____

I want to stay in the main lodge the mini-lodge a cabin an RV spot

I will need transportation from the airport.

FEES

\$175 per person

Children five years of age and under are at no additional charge

We are moving out in faith on the fees. Our cost at Doniphan is significantly higher than this, but we are keeping the fees as low as we can. If you are willing to make a monetary donation to help in bridging this financial gap, please include the extra amount in your check and indicate that it is a retreat donation.

Make checks payable to GALA and indicate on memo line: GALA Retreat

Mail completed registration form and payment to: GALA, PO Box 146, Lapeer MI 48446

- Everyone is invited to bring an item or two for the silent auction! The more diverse the donated items, the more interesting the bidding! Please plan to pay for auction items separately.
- The banquet theme is "Back to the Future" – feel free to dress from your favorite decade!
- Bath and bed linens are provided in the main lodge (private room w/two double or queen beds) and the mini-lodges (eight rooms with four bunk beds and private bath). Folks in cabins need to provide their own bedding and towels.
- There are 20 RV spots available.





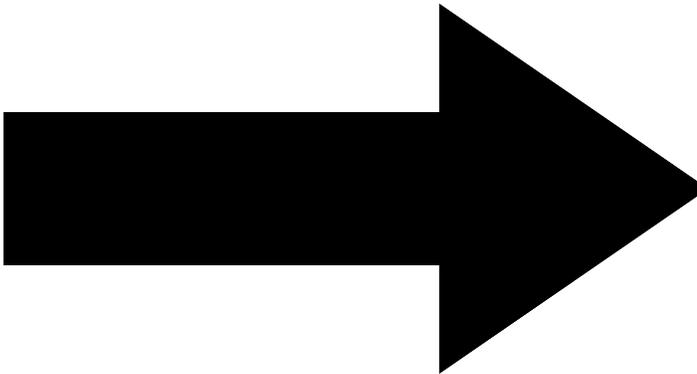
May 2016

P.O. Box 146
Lapeer, MI 48446

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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MAIL WORKS

Join or renew your
membership
today here
or online at
www.galaweb.org



2016 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 donation for the 2016 retreat:
 \$50 \$100 \$200 or \$ _____

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**

