



galanews

THE  LETTER

Serving members and friends of
Community of Christ

March 2010
Volume 21 Issue 1

GALA/WCN Schedule of World Conference Events

Friday, April 9, 2010, 7:00 p.m.

Organization and strategy meeting
Cornerstone Community of Christ, 1316 South Osage
Food Provided!

Friday, April 9, 2010, 8:00 p.m.

Training: Strategic Story-Telling
Cornerstone Community of Christ, 1316 South Osage

Sunday, April 11, 2010, 10:00 a.m.

Communion Service, The Auditorium. If you are interested in
serving, visit the website, CofChrist.org, to register.

Tuesday, April 13, 2010, 4:30-6:30 p.m.

GALA/WCN Reception
Truman Memorial Center, 416 West Maple

(Continued on page 3)

GALA

Executive Board

David Howard, President

howard092248@yahoo.com
(216) 712-7218

Allan Fiscus, Past President

acfiscusrn@aol.com

Clyde Frey, Secretary

cfrey@newstrax.com

David Woosley, Under Secretary for Publications

dwoosley@sbcglobal.net

Patti Danielson, Treasurer

Billy VanSteinBerg, Past-Treasurer

leathergymrat@yahoo.com

Members At Large:

Chuck Hewitt

mikechuckh@gmail.com

Sandra Merth

s_merth59@yahoo.com

Larry Pickering

pipes61@aol.com

Visit us on the web at:

galaweb.org

President's Message *by David Howard*

It is with much anticipation that we approach World Conference this year. The relationships we have built, the planning we have done, the January counsel, and the by-laws amendment to set up regional conferences as decision making entities on cultural issues all potentially point toward a huge step forward for LGBT inclusion and acceptance of our relationships. This will be a giant leap of faith for our leaderships and the membership. Let us support them through prayer during this pre-conference period. Perhaps it is best summed up by the prologue to the legislative section for conference on the church's website.

As the body of Christ, it is imperative that Community of Christ approaches legislative issues with great care, understanding, and sensitivity to the voices and perspectives of members throughout the world. As an international church represented in nearly fifty nations, it is important that we learn to talk about divisive issues without separating from the body.

We have been counseled as a church to "Listen together to one another, without judgment or predisposition. Do not assume that the answers to matters of conflict have yet been perceived. There is much labor to be done. Reason together in love, and the Spirit of truth will prevail" (Doctrine and Covenants 162:5c).

Whatever the outcome of these legislative issues, Community of Christ members must commit to ongoing dialogue while lovingly upholding our common faith in Jesus Christ and the mission of the church. [Reprinted from Community of Christ webpage.]

Some will say that this is another tactic to defer and delay, and that even if it passes, it will be a couple of years before regional conferences can be convened. Part of that may be true. But I would suggest that the process outlined provides us with the best opportunity ever in this church for total inclusion. If it takes a few years after to convene conferences, at least we know the process is in place and progress is being made.

There is still much work to do. We must be positive in our witness at Conference. We must pray for opportunities to share our experiences with others. We must be focused, respectful and prayerful. If all this goes through, we still will have to work hard in our jurisdictions to move the process forward.

Let us rejoice in this opportunity and this day that has been presented to us!

Wednesday, April 14, 2010, 7:00 p.m.

GALA/WCN Movie Night

"For The Bible Tells Me So"

Cornerstone Community of Christ, 1316 South Osage

Thursday, April 15, 2010, 12:30-1:30 p.m.

GALA/WCN Worship Service, College Park Community of Christ,
1021 West College

Saturday, April 17, 2010, T.B.A.

GALA/WCN Social, location T.B.A.

STAND UP AND BE COUNTED

Do you share an affirmation that GLBT persons should have full inclusion in the church? If you do we would like to add your name with your brothers and sisters who have chosen to stand up for our GLBT brothers and sisters.

In addition, if you submit a brief story or statement you would like to share expressing your experience or thoughts regarding these issues it will be printed for people to read. Personal statements and stories have an effect. Each one brings a different perspective, so every story is needed. However stories must be limited to 130 words. A picture also adds impact if you care to send one.

The list of names along with the statements and stories submitted for use will be part of the WCN display at the WCN/GALA reception and drop-in center, both at the Truman Memorial building just a few blocks from the temple.

Please do your part to inform people about the need for change; the need for full inclusion. Let your voice be heard --- or at least your name to be listed.

Send your name (and story/ statement and picture) to PatMarmoy4wcn@aol.com. Please share this information with others who share our concern.

Newsworthy

World Conference Events


Plan to attend the following events at World Conference:

- ◆ Peace Village, LGBT display at the Diversity Team Booth (see conference schedule.)
- ◆ LGBT drop in center, Truman Memorial Center, 416 West Maple; open every day of Conference week; times to be determined.
- ◆ "For the Bible Tells Me So" movie night with panel discussion; April 14, 7:00 p.m., Cornerstone Community of Christ, 1316 South Osage.
- ◆ Welcoming Church workshops, Truman Memorial Center, 416 West Maple; dates to be determined.

E-mail from Lutherans Concerned/ North America

In the Winter issue of CONCORD, we reported to you that, for the first time, the U.S. Census Bureau is going to count and report statistics on the number of same-gender couples in the United States. The update on that is that the Census Bureau will report BOTH the number of same-gender couples that consider their relationship to be that of spouses AND those that consider their relationship to be that of unmarried partners.

In both cases the reports will be based on what people consider their relationships to be,



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.

not whether they are married/partnered in the eyes of the law. It is the perception of the couple that counts, not whether there is a marriage license or legal document with their names on it. It does not matter whether or not the local jurisdiction recognizes the relationship in any way at all.

These are the same rules and manner under which heterosexual couples report their relationships.

Prior to this census, the Bureau had gathered some data on the prevalence of same-gender couples in society but had been prevented by the Bush Administration from reporting any of the data. This past summer, the Obama Administration instructed the Bureau that that restriction was no longer in effect.

The form you will get in the mail asks how many people live in the residence. It asks that one person be designated Person 1 and then that the relationship of others in the household to Person 1 be reported, along with demographic data like gender. If Person 2 is indicated as Husband/wife, the Bureau will count them as a married couple. If Person 2 is indicated as Unmarried Partner, the Bureau will count them as living together in a relationship not as committed as married. If the genders of the reported couple are the same, that relationship will be reported as same-gender.

Gender, race/ethnicity, married/partnered, all are how the persons think of themselves, regardless of what legal documents may say or whether the relationship is recognized by any legal or religious authority.

The information you report to the Census Bureau is by law kept confidential and may not be released in any way that could point directly to you or your household. Therefore, you are encouraged to report information about your household as accurately as you are comfortable doing.

Phil Soucy
Director Communications LC/NA
communications@lcna.org

GALA Reteat 2010

Samish Island, WA

By Sandra Merth

Ten years ago was my very first GALA retreat at Samish Island. I had spent nearly 18 years of my life living in the Seattle area so it was a familiar place. Many trips to Samish transporting my nieces back and forth to different camps during those times created many fond memories of a beautiful place. But then I came out of the closet rather late in life, followed by hearing a sermon that told me I would go to hell, which would be the last time I would attend church for several years. Something that had become a habit over the years seemed so easily discarded over someone else's narrow mindedness.

Then I heard about GALA and the retreat they were having at Samish Island. I was intrigued and curious but wasn't sure about going. There was still a lot of anger at the church who had turned its back on me after many years of service. I wasn't sure it was time to return to any event where church members were gathered but I was in need of connecting with a group of GLBT people who shared a common background and history. The need to reconnect overrode my fears and the fact it was going to be held at one of my favorite campgrounds made it even easier to agree to attend.

I arrived with my luggage in the trunk of my car and my anger packed tightly and shoved neatly in a corner of that luggage. When I looked

around at those gathered two things occurred to me – I was confronted by the fact that it had been easier to walk away from what I had known and blame 'the church' and 'those awful people' than it was to stay and work thru my coming out with them and I was also surprised at how angry I still was.

That first retreat resonated peace to me so much so that my anger with the church subsided and specifically 'those awful people' and helped me launch into my life as a lesbian with a much more solid footing. The final service which included many things but ended with the release of doves will always be a reminder of releasing my anger.

We are now blessed with returning to Samish Island this coming Labor Day weekend for fellowship and fun. For some it may seem like a difficult place to get to but trust me, you will find the time there rewarding in so many ways. There is water to reflect upon, mountains



to be amazed with and blackberries to pick to your hearts content. Besides time for reflection and worship there will be the traditional talent show, Gay Bingo and Gay Olympics to keep us entertained.

Jim Slaughter from Florida will be our guest minister and we are excited and looking forward to spending time with him. He has been a great ally for us with the World Church and we are looking forward to having some blessed fun. Hope to see you there.

2010 GALA Board Openings

In accordance with the corporation Bylaws the following **three (3) positions** on the GALA Board of Directors are open for nomination & election in 2010.

- ♦ Secretary – elected to a two year term beginning October 1st in even numbered years.
- ♦ Treasurer-Elect – elected to a one year term beginning October 1st in even numbered years. In the succeeding year, he or she shall assume the office of Treasurer for a two (2) year term followed by a one (1) year term as Immediate Past Treasurer.
- ♦ Member-at-Large – elected to a three year term beginning October 1st in the year elected.

Nominations to the Board of Directors shall be made by a Nominating Committee. The committee shall solicit the GALA membership for suggestions for nominees and shall strive to include, both within its composition and its proposed slate of nominees, representation of persons of all sexual orientations, differing abilities, racial-ethnic backgrounds, gender identification, geographic locations and ages. The Nominating Committee Chairperson shall be appointed by the Board of Directors, and shall report to the GALA membership in the Spring GALA Newsletter, a slate of candidates sufficient to fill all vacant full and partial term positions on the Board of Directors.

So this is the part of the process that provides the opportunity for qualified candidates to step forward and indicate their willingness to actively serve in the capacity to which they wish to become elected! YOU are encouraged to become the leaven that will assist in the activities and events of GALA as we move to increase awareness and provide support between the

GALA communities and Community of Christ.

Indicate your desire to be nominated for one of the three offices available by transmitting written notification to **David Woosley**, dwoosley@sbcglobal.net or by mailing to GALA, Attn: Nominating Committee, PO Box 2173, Independence, MO 64055. Please include contact information including name, address, telephone number(s), e-mail address and qualifications. Additional opportunity to nominate will be made available once the Nominating Committee presents the slate of nominees for election to the Board of Directors.

MEMBERSHIP 2010

Membership Invoices were transmitted or mailed in mid January for the 2010 calendar year. We strongly encourage you to provide us with an e-mail address; a quicker, cheaper and more efficient manner to distribute this newsletter and other correspondence. Please remember that you may use PayPal to make a dues payment. You will find a link to PayPal on the GALA home page, www.galaweb.org.

2010 is the year for Community of Christ World Conference and we have planned many activities and opportunities to meet and greet attendees to Conference. The budget for 2010 includes expenses associated with our activities and events, so if you are so inclined and are able to make a donation, in addition to your membership dues, your participation in this manner will be greatly appreciated!

Thank you for your continued support! Invite your friends, neighbors, co-workers and people from your congregation to become members of GALA!

Independence GALA Chapter



In December 2009, the Independence GALA Chapter met for a meal and business meeting to discuss 2010's local events. Following a wonderful meal and fellowship we turned to the business for the evening, planning the next years' events and activities including community service activities. Different Ideas were discussed and most will require the help from all of the local members of GALA:

- ◆ **Prayer for Peace at the Temple.** Once each quarter; two on Saturday two on Wednesday. We need volunteers to lead each service. Chuck Hewitt will call and set-up the dates.
- ◆ **GAY Pride. (usually the first of June).** We will be working Gay Pride this year with help from the Stonewall congregation and Hart Ministries. If your congregation would be interested in helping with cost and staffing, please let us know.
- ◆ **Hart Ministries Westport.** Meals prepared for approximately 60 people on Fridays; preparation at 6:00 pm with serving at 7:00 pm. We will bring food and fix the meal in their facility. We could try this a couple of times and see how it goes. We need a volunteer to head-up this project.
- ◆ **Harvesters Food Bank.** Help stock shelves with food; great fellowship with others; 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm. We will check on times and dates. Plan on helping two times this year.

Any suggestions or comments on the above EXTRA activities would be appreciated, please contact the galainfoline@gmail.com (Independence MO local info line.)

The Following are the scheduled events for the upcoming year:

January 16: Chili Cook-off and Games at Michele & Donna's.

February 20: Karaoke Night and Pot luck at "Cornerstone"; Lori Graves hosting.

March 20th: Green party spring fling; place and person in charge TBA.

April 10-17: World Conference 2010. Different activities throughout the week. Help staff Drop-In Center or help in other areas where and when needed.

May 15: Cool Crest mini-golf tournament. Dinner at Sonic across the street. Sam & Pat Marmoy hosting.

June ????: Gay Pride booth; all will be needed to help. Donations needed to cover cost. Information as it becomes available.

July 17: 2pm, McCoy Park; Hamburgers, hot dogs, homemade ice cream, yard games; Arthur Butler hosting.

August 21: Activity TBA

September 18: Movie Night TBA

October 16: Snacks and Drag Queen and King party; Michele & Donna hosting.

November 20: Thanksgiving Dinner and planning session for next year at Cornerstone.

December 18: Meet at Arthur Butlers', go to Longview Lake for Lights, then back to Arthur's.

This is an exciting activity list. If you wish to be part of the Independence Chapter events, we have created an information line for prayer requests and local activity announcements, galainfoline@gmail.com. Send an e-mail with your information and you will be added to the list. Join the list even if you are not part of the Independence Chapter if you are interested in our activities.

GALA Merchandise On Website!

As many of you know, with no booth at World Conference, our visibility will be limited at the Auditorium and other conference venues. So please consider wearing GALA related items to boost our visibility; you never know when someone is looking for a GALA contact!

Our GALA related items:

- ◆ Our newly designed GALA pin is classy and easily worn on a collar or lapel.
- ◆ We are purchasing Rainbow lanyards for use at World Conference. You can use these lanyards for your nametag!
- ◆ Polo shirts with the GALA logo are available by pre-order. Tan and Light-blue shirts show off the GALA logo the best.

Watch the GALA website, www.galaweb.org, for ordering information (to be posted soon.) Contact: Allan Fiscus at: acfiscusrn@comcast.net for any additional information.

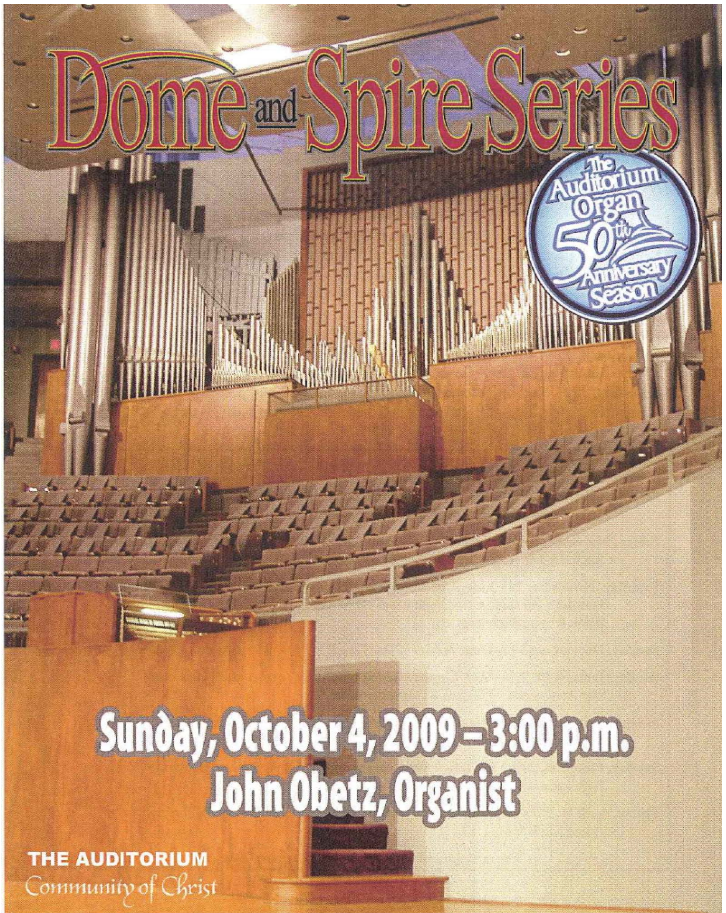


GALA SUPPORTS "Dome and Spire Series"

With Community of Christ struggling financially, like everyone else, GALA lent its support to Community of Christ's "Dome and Spire" by co-sponsoring two events in the series. The series is presently celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Auditorium Organ.

On October 4, 2009, John Obetz returned to the Auditorium Organ for this recital. John was instrumental in "The Auditorium Organ" radio series which was heard weekly for 26 years. On November 6, 2009, the 50th anniversary of the Auditorium Organ, principal organist Jan Kraybill, re-created the November 6, 1959 inaugural recital.

During the upcoming World Conference you can be a part of the series by joining in the April 16th International Hymn Festival. Check out the GALA website for copies of the programs from Jan's and John's recitals.



GALA Nominating Committee

President David Howard has appointed the following individuals to the Nominating Committee for officers for 2010-2011:

- Todd Davison, tjdavison@missvalley.com
- Ellen Frye, trap4trivia@aol.com
- Chuck Hewitt, mikechuckh@gmail.com
- Sandra Merth, s_merth59@yahoo.com
- David Woosley, dwoosley@sbcglobal.net

David Woosley will serve as the Chair. If you are interested in serving on the GALA Board, contact anyone on the committee.



2010 GALA Board Retreat/Board of Directors Meeting and Events

The 2010 GALA Board Retreat & Meeting was held in balmy 75 degree weather as light winds caressed our faces and trees began to bud; with only a hint of the spring that would quickly follow. WAIT....just a minute, as I recall it was cold, there was more snow on the ground than we had in Buffalo when my jet departed and there was so much fog that one could hardly see the 'SCOOPS' sign as I pulled in for a cup of coffee before making the drive into Independence. Oh well, we weren't there because of the weather, we were there to conduct the business of GALA and to participate in a joint meeting with Welcoming Community Network [WCN] members.

Six hearty souls appeared in the parking lot of the Stone Church and helped carry in provisions for the day; GALA had volunteered to provide 'lunch' for both groups. Each group situated themselves in their respective areas & after a brief 'breakfast', hosted by Arthur Butler, the groups found their seats and began the topics for discussion for the day....looking forward to the appetizing 'lunch' break just a few short hours down the road!

Our treasurer, Patti Danielson, was unable to be in attendance, so we were fortunate to be able to contact her via cell phone and she was able to participate from that vantage point ... where would we be without technology? She was able to provide answers to financial questions, an update on our current financial status, and participate in the discussion that, at times, was animated and brisk.

The Secretary, Clyde Frey, was asked about the annual membership invoices....for those of you that may not recall the membership year was changed last year by a vote of the membership to coincide with the calendar year. The calendar year Membership invoices, it seems, were either transmitted via e-mail or through surface mail in the couple of days preceding the Board Retreat. It might also be helpful to note that by accessing the GALA website at www.galaweb.org anyone can click on the link for membership and renew or become a new member of GALA. Pass that along to all your 'friends and family,' they just might be interested in becoming members too!

Once the nitty-gritty 'business' issues were completed we were able to get into discussions about the 2009 Retreat – Camp Doniphan. Each year we provide evaluations for attendees to complete so we have a better of idea of how what we are doing is working and where we might need to make adjustments. It seems that the responses on the evaluations were all very positive! 'Hooray!', we all shouted. Nope, didn't happen that way either....they were positive, but we wanted to dig a little deeper to determine what we could do better!

Some board members commented that in some years, people felt we did not have enough classes and some that we had too many to choose from; a balancing act that is predicated on the number of attendees and their participation levels. The diversity of having spread out locations in which to meet for each of our groups was found to be a plus; everyone

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enjoyed a little walk, a 'safe house' feeling was felt, and no one was put out to go way far away.

Well, if you had been there (yes, you....why not? nevermind....just plan on attending THIS year in Samish Island!)....you participated in the wonderful assortment of items at the silent auction! SOME people took umbrage with the timing of the closing of accepting bids on auction items....I think it was just before some folks were able to get to the dining hall for the 'Pink Party'. Not that we necessarily need to let the time run until the end of the Retreat, but it was felt that perhaps going forward we might be able to offer a little more time for folks to participate....gives us a chance to out bid one another!

The 'Pink Party', where everyone was encouraged to wear some type of 'pink' apparel brought out diversity with a capital 'D'! The delightful centerpieces, created by everyone in the Retreat that could wield a glue gun, added to the atmosphere. The Talent Show was such a delight with a great number of entrants and included a pageant that was open to a full array of participants. There just seemed to be a great many activities and events that catered to the interests of our widely 'aged' group. I believe that we decided that perhaps we should encourage the theme to be a 'color' every year so attendees have the opportunity to shine, shine, shine!

Moving towards the 2010 Retreat in Samish Island over Labor Day weekend, we discussed issues of logistics that can make a retreat located there somewhat interesting and dynamic. We are in discussions with guest ministry from Community of Christ and since someone else was assigned the responsibility to make a report on the facility, I shall take a pass on it. Suffice it to say that we anticipate dynamic ministry, a

weekend full of growing together as community and time to share with GALA members.

We have seen increased communication with members of Community of Christ that has been positive and open to discussion over the past year. We've also seen the addition of a Facebook site that has ably been administered by Allan Fiscus. He indicated that there have been a number of hits on the site and we continue to provide a contact point through that avenue. The GALA newsletter has been well received and we've made strides in moving people to distribution by e-mail. Each of these is an avenue of communication that we have sought to utilize in the age of increased electronic technology. We are always looking for new avenues, suggestions, recommendations & assistance from time-to-time.

In looking at what has happened over the past year we were able to look at the newly redesigned GALA pins that made their first appearance at the 2009 GALA Retreat; they really are quite nice! We also took some time to discuss other means of 'marketing' GALA as we move forward into World Conference & beyond. The 'plantings' in the oversized planters outside The Temple in Independence, MO were well received and an added visual as well as spiritual blessing to the grounds; the continuation of this effort in 2010 will be another positive plus in how we interact with Community of Christ.

We took some more time to handle upcoming issues like 2010 Pride Celebrations, donations to Outreach International for Haiti and HIV, size of the GALA Board, & assignments for this issue of the GALA newsletter....yes, you got stuck with me!

Then we took a brief break and began discussions about World Conference that included

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(Board Retreat Continued from page 10)

ideas for sharing booth space in the 'diversity booth' in the World Plaza, a place for people to drop-in, the GALA worship service, the GALA reception and other visual ideas. Since we will be sharing space in the 'diversity booth' we are as yet unable to determine how much space we will actually have and how many people will be needed to have someone present when the booth is open for activity. We do know that we will hold a GALA worship service and a GALA reception on two different nights during World Conference. There has been a request to have a baby blessed during the worship service & we are so excited to have been asked to hold this during the service. The reception will feature a high level of food service and we expect that there will be a positive reaction from attendees.

An off-site drop-in location is expected to be available; like a 'safe haven' with open arms.....a place that can be quiet, comfortable and welcoming. It just seems that there is so much planning that goes into one short week of activities, but hopefully that planning that will aid in making someone feel 'at home' when they stop in to visit.

We celebrated lunchtime with the folks from WCN in various culinary delights....or were most of those from Sam's Club? Just kidding! The sharing and fellowship during the meal was wonderful! In the afternoon both groups discussed the various aspects of the upcoming World Conference. It was a very productive day for both groups and we felt the sense of accomplishment in our preparations.

Later that evening both groups shared with the Kansas City-Independence GALA Chapter in a 'Chili Cook-off' themed potluck at Walnut Gardens, Community of Christ. We were blessed to share in six different styles of chili and

assorted other complimentary items!

Clyde Frey's relatives, Amanda (daughter), Wally (son-in-law) and Conner, Sam and Isaac (grandsons) joined with us, so the activity for the evening became a lively game of musical chairs that was followed by an even more robust game of duck-duck-goose....I've never seen such 'mature' folks so determined to win out over youngsters (4, 6 & 8) as that gathered group! The laughter & excitement was contagious & everyone left at the end of the evening having experienced a grand time!

The next morning members of both groups attended worship service at Walnut Gardens where Ken McLaughlin was the speaker. The trio that sang several musical numbers was exceptional and the spirit in the entire service was warm and welcoming. Clyde's daughter Amanda and family were again in attendance along with his son, Aaron and daughter-in-law Heather. Although they all attend Community of Christ, they attend at another congregation, but were most happy to come out to Walnut Gardens; it was truly impressive to have everyone in everyone's families gather for worship.

The weekend was capped with the gathering in The Temple for the delivery of inspired counsel from President Steve Veazey. A spirit of calm seemed to pervade the entire presentation....and that was after a somewhat slow start due to what appeared to have been technical difficulties in internet transmission of the service. The entire weekend was packed full of meetings and activities designed to get us into planning mode for events that will transpire at World Conference and in the year 2010. We were so blessed to be able to join together to share and look forward to the year ahead!



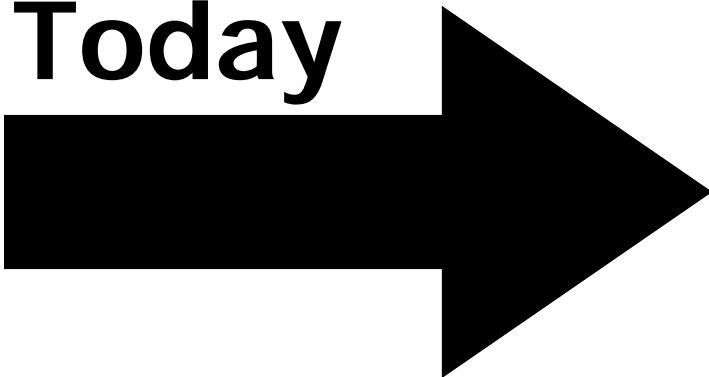
March 2010

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Membership Level (U.S. dollars):

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Contributions to GALA are tax deductible.

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