



# galanews

THE  LETTER

Serving members and friends of  
Community of Christ

April 2014  
Volume 25 Issue 1

## Annual GALA Retreat 2014

*by Stephen Donahoe*

The Labor Day GALA Retreat is the most important event in the GALA community's calendar. Please reserve Labor Day Weekend now because we would love to see you at the retreat. This year's retreat will be in Whispering Pines Campground near Prescott, Arizona and the fabulous Lauren Hall will be our guest minister.

Lauren is a past GALA President and has been the Project Manager of the new Hymnal Project at the Community of Christ for the past several years. She has been a tremendous leader in organizing the new hymnal, Community of Christ Sings. Our hymnal has been heralded as "prophetically courageous" by John D. Thornburg, a hymnal expert. Personally speaking, singing hymns such as "For Everyone Born" (# 285) and "All Are Welcome" (# 276) with hundreds of church members from around the country at this year's Peace Colloquy was truly a healing experience. If you already have a copy of Community of Christ Sings, bring your copy along, because we are going to be SINGING

with "justice and joy" at this year's retreat!

Besides sharing our stories and fellowshiping together, we will be celebrating the change in Community of Christ policy in several countries, including the U.S. and Canada, to be much more inclusive of LGBTQ people.

Participating in GALA Retreats has been a tremendous blessing in my life because of the opportunity to share together with people who truly understand what it means to be a LGBTQ person in the Community of Christ. I have been transformed by the love and acceptance I have experienced at this retreat by other LGBTQ members and allies. I hope you will take the opportunity to join us to make our retreat even richer and maybe even to be transformed yourself!

There will be a shuttle service from Phoenix International Airport (PHX), so if you are flying to attend the retreat, you might want to consider flying into this airport. Check our GALA's website, [galaweb.org](http://galaweb.org), in order to get updated information about the retreat. We look forward to seeing you there!

# GALA

## Executive Board

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**Clyde Phillips-Frey,**

**President-Elect**

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**Visit us on the web:**

**galaweb.org**

# President's Message

*by Saundra Merth*

The GALA Board met in Michigan for its annual retreat this past January. We were graciously hosted by the Otter Lake Community of Christ Congregation who welcomed us with open arms. The Sunday morning service that we were in charge of was a spirit filled service thanks to the participation of all the Board members, the stories they shared and the participation of the congregation.

I had been prayerful in my preparations for the weekend and used a framework of where have we been, where are we now and where are we going for topic discussions and planning. As an organization we have spent many years urging the leadership of the church to fully embrace and include everyone. This dream came to fruition last April at US National Conference and also the Canadian and Australian conferences. Policies are being rewritten and are beginning to be implemented in these areas.

The goal of inclusion has been our primary mission for so many years it seems an appropriate time to review our goals moving forward and how we want to get there. Can we still be relevant to the LGBT community within Community of Christ? Are we clear about who we are and what we embrace? Maybe not.

When GALA was formed over 30 years ago it's name was relevant to the time – now perhaps it is not. Do bisexual and transgender people know that they are included and welcomed? We have found out that they do not easily relate to our organization because of our name. We are also not reaching the youth who identify LGBTQ younger than before and are struggling with the slow pace of change in our church. We have always made an effort to have diversity represented on our board but we need to see more diversity in our membership as well.

To this end you will be seeing some changes big and small to our organization. To reach the youth – more electronic communications via FaceBook and our website. To bisexual and transgender persons – removing Gay and Lesbian Acceptance on all our messaging and including just our tagline – A community, welcoming gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons and their allies. Updating how we share our stories during our sharing circles at retreat and focusing on regional affiliates so that we can gather more frequently than just once a year.

Of course, we hope to do more and become more relevant where you are but you need to reach out to us and let us know how we can be of service to you and your congregation wherever you are. Please feel free to reach out to any GALA Board member with ideas or concerns and keep an eye on our FaceBook page for the latest news.

# GALA Newsletter Transmission

by Clyde Phillips-Frey, President-Elect

## IMPORTANT!

Communications from the GALA Board of Directors to the GALA members and those that indicate that they would like to know about GALA activities occurs primarily through the publication in which this article appears; the GALA Newsletter....a statement of the obvious! The GALA Board has decided that in response to our perception of responsible stewardship and budgetary constraints to move to a primarily electronic format for our newsletter.

GALA maintains a list of addresses to which the newsletter is mailed as well as a list to which email notification is sent that the newsletter is available online to peruse. A couple of years ago those that received the newsletter via snail mail were encouraged to provide an email address so that we could begin migration to a primarily electronic format.

The GALA Board was presented with the fact at the January Board of Directors Retreat meeting that GALA currently prints and mails 400+ copies of the GALA Newsletter with each publication. The component costs of our printed newsletter include printing, folding, stuffing, addressing, and postage. Additional costs of fifty-cents per newsletter are also incurred from the Post Office for each newsletter returned due to change of address for which GALA has not received notification. A significant amount of the annual GALA budget is dedicated to the printed version of

this publication.

The number of dues paying members that receive the newsletter by snail mail number about 20; providing insufficient income to support continuing to mail 400+ copies each time the publication is produced. These dues paying members shall continue to receive the newsletter by snail mail if they do not have access to email or the internet. Anyone else that chooses to become a dues paying member and needs to receive the newsletter by snail mail shall also receive it in that manner. Primarily the newsletter shall be available by visiting the GALA website at [galaweb.org](http://galaweb.org); notification of the availability of the newest issue shall be delivered by email notice.

So, here's the bottom line, beginning with the next issue, a newsletter availability notice shall be sent via email notification. For those 20 dues paid members currently receiving the newsletter by snail mail nothing will change; they shall continue to receive the publication by mail. If you want to become a dues paid member (form available elsewhere in this publication or on the GALA website) AND want to receive the publication by mail, please submit your membership request to GALA, PO Box 146, Lapeer, MI 48446. Of course, we shall also be happy to process your membership dues payment along with an email address to which we would send notification of the GALA newsletter availability.

# GALA Retreat Michigan

GALA members in Michigan have created a new affiliate chapter and held a regional retreat on February 14-16, 2014 at Bluewater Campground in Lexington, Michigan. Over twenty people came together to worship, fellowship, ask questions, and make new friends. GALA welcomed gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and straight allies in a community designed to “Build Bridges of Community”. We spent time playing games, playing volleyball, and taking classes. We built bridges made of marshmallows and toothpicks and used them to support hymns. We shared stories of hurt and pain, but also stories of joy and healing. Over a weekend, we built bonds and decided to continue our community-building at additional activities throughout the year.

The GALA retreat in Michigan caused us to look deeper within ourselves and our experiences; to ask

questions of ourselves and others to learn more about ourselves and our faith community. We shared testimony and prayer with each other, and joined in communion at our closing service to build more bridges to community. Special thanks to Erin Cavanaugh for organizing and leading the retreat, Sharon Gernaat for handling the financial arrangements for the retreat, Noelle Gaffka for providing amazing guest ministry, Josie Dalton-Gow for making delicious food, and everyone who attended for sharing themselves!

## LGBT Estate Planning

**QUESTION:** *Bishop Greg, Why would a same-sex/gender couple want to create an estate plan? - Curious*

**ANSWER:** Dear Curious, The short, simple answer is control! In a same-sex/gender relationship (legally married or not) a good estate plan gives each partner more control over one’s property, other asset accounts, and healthcare planning. And with a good estate plan in this relationship if you were to face severe health issues or even premature death, you will have already dictated who would participate in your care plan or would manage and arrange your affairs. Finally, the plan also allows you to establish your legacy for the people and organizations you care for and love. – Bishop Greg

Note: The content of this column is for information and educational purposes only. In all cases, contact your personal attorney and/or estate planner. Have a question? Send your request to Cindy Campbell at [cicamp7@gmail.com](mailto:cicamp7@gmail.com). Community of Christ provides estate planners at no fee for services to members and friends of the church throughout USA and Canada. Contact: [egp@cofchrist.org](mailto:egp@cofchrist.org).



*Leon Berg, member of GALA, is ordained to the office of Priest by Steven Shields and Lindsay Sills, Sunday, April 6, 2014, Norton Heights Community of Christ, Kansas City, MO.*

# GALA Remembers



**Gwendolyn Marie Smith**, 71, passed away on Saturday, November 23, 2013, at a Bangor, ME hospital. Gwen was born on October 12, 1942, in Beals, ME. She attended Beals Schools and studied nursing in Independence, MO, where she was employed for many years. After

retiring, Gwen lived for a number of years in Lee's Summit, MO, before returning to Beals Island in May 2012. As a member of Community of Christ, Gwen served as a delegate to the church's 2010 World Conference from the Midlands Mission Center. Gwen was elected to represent Maine at the 2013 Conference but was unable to attend because of failing health. Gwen is survived by Lois Sloan of Salem, OR, her long-time companion; a daughter, Sue, of Lee's Summit; four sons, Aaron, Dixon and Brian of Beals, and Charlie of Jonesport, ME; 18 grandchildren and 8 great-grandchildren; five brothers, including Velton Peabody of Independence; and 14 sisters; Gwen was predeceased by her parents and a brother. A celebration of life was held on Saturday, November 30, 2013, at the Beals Community of Christ, followed by a brief graveside service at the Beal Family Cemetery in Beals.

*Gwen was a long-time member of GALA.*



**Pamela Annette Mayfield**, 59, passed away on Friday, November 29, 2013, at her home in Kansas City, MO. Pam was born May 27, 1954. Pam grew-up in the Miami and

Fairland, OK, area, graduating from Fairland High School in 1972, where she excelled in basketball.

Pam attended Rogers State College, Claremore, OK, on a basketball scholarship. Following a career in business in the Norman and NE Oklahoma region, she moved to the greater Kansas City area in 1985, working for General Nutrition Centers as a district manager and then attending Park College, Parkville, MO. Pam taught elementary school for one year before moving to Johnson County Community College, Olathe, KS, in the Student Financial Aid Department. Pam was a member of Community of Christ. Pam is survived by her mother, brother, sister, nieces and nephews, sister-in-law, her beloved dogs Toby and Coco, and her cats Buddy and Dash. Funeral services were held Tuesday December 3, 2013, at the Speaks Suburban Chapel, Independence, MO, followed by a graveside service and burial in the G.A.R. Cemetery, Miami, OK.

*Pam previously served as GALA Secretary.*

**Mary Lou Zimmerman**, 85, passed away on Wednesday, February 5, 2014. Mary Lou was born November 15, 1928, in Independence, MO. Mary Lou was a member of Gudgell Park Community of Christ.

*Mary Lou was the mother of Alan Zimmerman, who previously served as GALA President.*

## Treasurer's Report

**Balance January 1, 2014:**  
**\$13,747.23**

**Income January-March 2014:**  
**\$4,137.90**

**Expenses January-March 2014:**  
**\$2,892.44**

**Balance March 31, 2014:**  
**\$14,992.69**



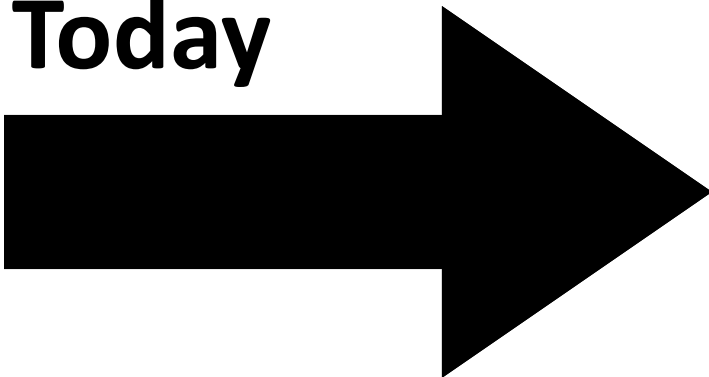
April 2014

P.O. Box 146  
Lapeer, MI 48446

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# Join, or Renew Your Membership Today



## 2014 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**