



# galanews

THE  LETTER

Serving members and friends of the  
Community of Christ

May 2009  
Volume 20 Issue 2

## GALA Retreat 2009

“WE SHARE A MISSION”

This year's retreat will be held over Labor Day weekend at the Lake Doniphan Conference and Retreat Center, 12856 Doniphan Lake Road, Excelsior Springs, MO 64024, [www.lakedon.org](http://www.lakedon.org). The retreat center is located on 300 acres on the eastern edge of historic Excelsior Springs. It offers a peaceful natural environment for our education, recreation and spiritual renewal.

Facilities include the Main Lodge, which features 33 bedrooms, each with two double or two queen beds and a private bath. These rooms are fully furnished and carpeted, with bed and bath linens supplied. The dining room is just a short walk down the hallway from any bedroom. It will be where meals are provided as well as a 24-hour coffee and juice bar.

The Main Lodge is equipped with wireless internet service and 9 plug-in ports. There are RV spots for those who wish to bring their lodging with them. A swimming pool and hiking trails are available

### GALA Election 2009

The following positions are up for election this year; if you are interested in running for one of the positions or nominating someone for one of the positions, please contact David Woosley at [dwoosley@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dwoosley@sbcglobal.net) by July 1, 2009:

President-Elect

Under Secretary for Publications

Member At Large (3-year term)

for those who are interested. If you are planning to use the pool, you will need to bring your own beach towel. Canoes and paddleboats are also available for the lower lake and “catch & release” fishing for those who would enjoy that.

Start planning now to attend. Get ready and get excited for a chance to renew old friendships as well as make new ones. See you at Lake Doniphan.

#### Scholarships

We know the price of the retreat is higher this year than in previous years. This is due to the cost of having a retreat at Camp Doniphan with its excellent facilities. The Board also knows that this may present hardships for those wanting to attend. Our first priority is to have YOU attend. Past retreats have changed people's lives, and we know it will happen at this one too.

If you feel you can't afford to come to the Retreat, please email David Howard at [howard092248@yahoo.com](mailto:howard092248@yahoo.com). We have scholarships available to help offset the cost. We want to do this if it means the difference between you attending or not. Please let us know soon, so we can adequately plan and provide for the need.

Also, if you would like to contribute to the scholarship fund, donate online or send checks to the address mentioned in the newsletter.

#### Silent Auction

One of the highlights of past retreats has been the silent auction. It's always fun to try to win the items you bid on (why did I pay \$100 for those Turkish skewers..because I like them, Pat!), or try to

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# **GALA**

## **Executive Board**

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**David Howard, President**  
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(216) 712-7218

**Allan Fiscus, Past  
President**  
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**Patti Danielson,  
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### **Members At Large:**

**Chuck Hewitt**  
mikechuckh@gmail.com

**Sandra Merth**  
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**Larry Pickering**  
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Visit us on the web at:

**galaweb.org**

## **President's Message** *by David Howard*

### **We Share a Mission**

**WE SHARE A MISSION;** What does that mean to us? What is our mission? As GALA continues to grow and mature this statement says it all. GALA is a place for healing, renewing old friendships and making new ones. GALA is a place of renewal and also a safe place where each one can explore life and their personal journey of discovery. That is part of our mission.

GALA is also a part of the Community of Christ. The leadership of GALA has worked hard the last year to build relationships and to partner with World Church Leadership on the Community's journey. And with the 2010 World Conference rapidly approaching, we must ponder what our role will be with the greater Community in understanding, educating, encouraging and breaking down barriers for full inclusion in the Community. That is part of our mission.

GALA is also part of the larger Community of Christians throughout the World. We must not forget that. What is our mission in the greater Community?

Each of you is encouraged to go to the Church's website: [www.cofchrist.org](http://www.cofchrist.org) and in the search field type in "We Share." This is a blueprint for each of us to follow as we come to an understanding of our role as individuals in the larger Community. Please study this document and as you discern the words realize the importance of its content and above all be prayerful in your studies. This document speaks volumes as to what it means to be a Community of Christ. That is also a part of our mission.

During the Labor Day retreat we will explore what our mission is and what part each of us has to play, as we renew old friendships and make new ones, as we have fun together, as we worship together, and as we support and love each other.

### **Guest Ministry**

President Steve Veazey will be in attendance at the Labor Day Retreat. He will lead the discussion on the retreat theme and also be available for a Q & A session. President Veazey will also participate in our worship experiences.

Dr. Anita Bradshaw, consultant for WCN will also be a guest at the retreat. She will participate in worship as well as direct us on strategies for the 2010 World Conference.

We are also trying to secure a young adult minister to assist us in ministry for the weekend.

### **Fun Fun Fun**

As usual there will be a lot of crazy stuff at the retreat too. Back by popular demand will be Gay Bingo and a new and improved version of the Gay Olympics, and of course swimming! Games, movies and campfires will be thrown in for good measure. And to top it all off, Todd Davison is planning the banquet and the talent show. Sooo...bring your swimsuit, blanket and outrageous costumes. Leave your tired old bones at home...and lets have a good time!

# Newsworthy

## Supporting the Journey

David Howard attended the Cleveland HRC dinner recently. Several LGBT members of the staff at UCC headquarters were also there. As they caught up on what was happening in their lives, David mentioned what GALA was doing. They spontaneously gave him their commitment to walk with us as we proceed with plans for the 2010 Conference and future meetings. David was touched by their willingness to journey with us.

David also chatted with the Faith and Religion Director for HRC. This is a resource we can use in the future. He was familiar with the Community of Christ and its workings. He also mentioned that the HRC website includes worship resources that are inclusive that follow the lectionary. For those of you that assist in planning services, check it out!

## Planting the Temple

GALA has received approval to plant the planters around the circular drive of the Temple. Mike Hewitt designed the planters and got approval from the Temple grounds people. By the time you receive this newsletter the plants will be happy in their new home and hopefully add a spectacular diverse entry into the lobby. Thanks to Mike for the design and approval work and to President Savage, Wim Van Klinken, and the Temple grounds keepers for working with us on this project. Thanks also to those who donated money and time to make this happen. If you would like to donate, please send your check to GALA, P.O. Box 2173, Independence, MO 64055.

## GALA at Pride Festivals

GALA will participate at Pride celebrations with booths in Buffalo, Kansas City and San Francisco, in partnership with the local congregations. Buffalo will have a congregational float as well. The new GALA brochure will be available at the booths and a banner-sized sign. If you are having celebrations and can use the banner, let us know! Booths will also have information about the Community of Christ and WCN.

## Stories – Tell Me the Story of .....each YOU!

With the huge success of the book *Homosexual Saints*, the GALA Executive Board felt that there are many more stories that you can tell about your journey, the journey of your son or daughter, or spouse or friend. Stories are powerful

indeed. GALA would like to have you submit your story to us to place on the website in a new "story" section. The story can be anonymous or carry your by-line. The story is what needs to be told, especially as we approach the 2010 World Conference. Will you please share with us?

## GALA Website and Facebook

Gala's website, [www.galaweb.org](http://www.galaweb.org), is getting a facelift! Drew Chesnutt and Allan Fiscus have been working on a new design and features to better reflect GALA on the web. The new site will feature an expanded photo gallery giving the opportunity for the local chapters to show off their activities. A calendar of events will also help GALA members and friends around the country to connect. Finally, the site will feature an opportunity for each to share their story, as an expanded witness of the book, *Homosexual Saints*.

Another avenue of communication in the internet world is Facebook. Facebook allows people and organizations to create a network of friends to share news, activities and photos. Allan Fiscus is working on a Facebook page for GALA members who are willing to be a part of the networking. Keep in touch with your GALA friends around the world using Facebook. If you're on Facebook type "Gay and Lesbian Acceptance" for the link.

## New Hymn

The GALA board has commissioned former World Church Director of Music Jack Ergo to compose an inclusive hymn *for* GALA. Jack has assured us that our 'new' hymn will be ready for submission in the Hymnal project! We are planning to debut this hymn at our upcoming GALA Labor Day Retreat at the closing worship service which will be officiated by President Steve Veazey. Jack has been invited to join us at the retreat and to play his/our composition for us at this exciting debut! Thanks to Larry Pickering for coordinating this project.

## GALA Going Green

Well, maybe heading towards green! The 2009 Membership Dues campaign is well under way and "*thank you*" to those that have responded with dues and donations! If you've set the paperwork aside, please pull it out or use the renewal form included in the newsletter and mail your dues or donation today! You may also renew your

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*(Newsworthy Continued from page 3)*

membership or make a donation online at [www.galaweb.org](http://www.galaweb.org). In an effort to streamline the process, make us more efficient, increase our cost effectiveness and print less on valuable paper, we've begun asking if we might provide the newsletter via e-mail! There is a place on the membership dues form as well as the newsletter form for an e-mail address. When the e-mail address is provided, we will be moving the transmission of the newsletter and contact to e-mail.

The delivery of the newsletter electronically is much more timely than bulk surface mailing and enables those persons that choose to have a 'copy in hand' to print at their convenience.

Currently we mail a little more than 575 copies of the newsletter, which is a reduction as we progress to moving addresses to e-mail transmission. The number of e-mail transmissions is currently 290 and continues to grow. The present goal is to migrate a majority of the printed newsletters to electronic transmission; with your help we can realize this goal!

If you are receiving the newsletter via surface mail and you would like to have it sent via e-mail, please send an e-mail to Clyde Frey (Secretary) at [cfrey@newstrax.com](mailto:cfrey@newstrax.com) with the simple request to 'move to e-mail' and include your name. The e-mail address from which the request was made will be used as the transmission address unless otherwise specified. A confirmation of the request to move to e-mail will be sent.

The cost savings accumulate as we are able to reduce our printing and mailing costs. The savings enable us to allocate those funds for other equally important GALA projects as we continue to work in our various communities.

So in review...

We will gladly accept membership dues payments and donations; send them in today! Request that the newsletter be sent via e-mail; a few simple clicks away!

Enjoy the newsletter at your leisure, online, just as soon as it is released!

### **Rights of Gays to Marry**

In the sensitive battle for Gay rights to marry in the United States, there regularly appears to be nearly a 50/50 vote. That means that whatever way the law leans, there will presently be a strong tide against it.

Having been the Presiding Elder in the Greeley, Co. of the Community of Christ congregation

for about 12 years, we were thrown in the fray. I came to the prayer-full position to support my young son who determined he was gay.

For example; how sensitive this issue is, was demonstrated by another priesthood member in our congregation whose son is also gay and this man spoke against the validity of the possibility of some people being naturally gay. What an amazing example of how tough this issue can be, for prayer-full people's beliefs going 180-degrees in the opposite direction.

Each side of the issue can make a strong, persuasive argument to someone who is not well informed. This is a good example of how important it is to be friendly in our differences and yet responsible to our best judgment.

Points of view are unique in all humans. Thank goodness this is true, otherwise people could not think for themselves. We all have the right and the responsibility to use our mind and emotions in a way that is respectful to God's human race.

Some people, in conversation, can be heard demeaning the financially poor of our society. They appear to, "expertly" defend, their superiority over minorities.

We need to remember that since we all are children of God, Christians believing in the earthly Son of God, Jesus Christ, these beliefs we develop will be with us through eternity. Will these hold up in the presence of God? What we become is our stewardship to the Great Almighty and it does have eternal consequences!

It was interesting to note that the vote of the Iowa Supreme Court, Friday April 3, 2009, was unanimous in its decision to allow gay people to marry. This is significant because of the many rights that go along with this legal marriage. After all, we all want to be treated fairly in the eyes of God.

Yes, we are aware of persons who can voluminously express the opposite point of view. We must remember, as a large God-fearing society, our personal effect will have a HOLY, noticeable affect throughout all eternity!

*By Hal McKain, Ph.D. April 11, 2009*

### **New Books of Interest to GALA**

Hal and Martha McKain have written two new books and have provided them to be downloaded for you to read. Hal and Martha write, "We think that this would be a good way for the readers to read our positive testimonies of all kinds of issues of

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(Newsworthy Continued from page 4)

Graceland, the church and especially the gay issues. GALA is dear to our hearts and we are so happy for the new advances.

"Confronting God" can be downloaded at <https://www.onlinefilefolder.com/3s57r0h5mILV01>.

"Listening to God" can be downloaded at <https://www.onlinefilefolder.com/3s1FzVQOxcl2Bj>.

### Lawrence, Kansas GALA

GALA members and friends in Lawrence, Kansas met in March for their monthly movie night to watch *The Pacifier* and the second episode of *Eli Stone*. This was followed-up in April by viewing *Peggy Sue Got Married* and the third episode of *Eli Stone*. Both events were held at the home of Terry Mitchell.

### Southern California GALA

This Spring, family and friends in Southern California looked forward to gathering once again for the annual Passover Seder. The evening event was filled with the recounting of the Jews exodus from slavery to freedom, dining with special foods related to the rituals, and sharing their own strivings for liberation and acceptance.

Members and friends of GALA in Southern California were invited to join together with Basileia: An Open Door Community of Christ and Anaheim Community of Christ congregations to celebrate the 16th annual observance of the Passover Seder. Dinner was provided because on this night no one should be alone.

### Independence-Kansas City GALA

What a wonderful turn out; we had about 31 people, good food and fellowship. Pam did an outstanding job with the grilling, and Toby (the dog) was a never ending source of entertainment. We want to send a very big thank you to Pam and Kristin for opening their home. What a beautiful day and we had some warmth coming from the chim-ana (fire pit). **THANKS PAM AND KRISTIN.**



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.

## In Memory of Alan Zimmerman



Keith "Alan" Zimmerman, 60, of Independence, MO peacefully passed away Wednesday, March 25, 2009 at his home surrounded by his family. Memorial contributions may be made to the KU Med Cancer Center or to GALA. Alan was born October 13, 1948 in Independence, MO to Keith D. and Mary Lou (Barnes) Zimmerman. He graduated from Truman High School in 1966. His love of music led him to KU, graduating with a degree in Music Therapy. Mr. Zimmerman was an Eagle Scout and was a Brave in the Tribe of Mic-O-Say. Alan was a High Priest and former pastor of the Raytown Community of Christ Congregation. His world revolved around his family, and he had a special bond with his grandsons. Mr. Zimmerman was passionate about diversity, acceptance, inclusion, and he was known for his generosity to all. Alan is survived by his life partner, Richard Kent-Jordan; former wife and best friend, Fran Zimmerman; son, Geoff Zimmerman and wife Jennifer; daughter, Jenny Jewell and husband Ben; grandsons, Bryce and Connor Zimmerman; his parents, Keith and Mary Lou Zimmerman; sisters, Nancy Weber and partner John Holmes, Becky Queener and husband George; and by a host of extended family and friends.

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run up the other person without having to buy it! Each of the last 2 years we have raised over \$500 from the auction. The money is used to offset retreat expenses and for other GALA activities. We will have the auction again this year, so start accumulating items or think of the things you have that you can part with. This helps GALA out tremendously....and its fun!

### 2009 GALA Retreat Choir

This year, we will once again be forming a Retreat Choir that will perform one or two pieces during the closing Labor Day Retreat Worship/ Communion service. We will rehearse in two one-hour sessions during the retreat weekend. I will be needing singers of all parts; soprano, alto, tenor and bass. President Steve Veazey will officiate this service! The last time we had a GALA choir that performed for our Church President was at the Ohio Retreat. We had 43 singers then...can we beat that number this year?

If you are a singer and plan to attend the retreat, *please* consider joining us and sharing your

## GOD BECKONS US

Harold L. McKain Jr. and Martha R. McKain  
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Mem-bers of the Chris-tian faith, re-spect each race,  
no time or need for nar-row-ness or dis-grace.  
Mi-nor-i-ties are val-ued, loved and cher-ished,  
not by tri-al and err-or or we per-ish.

We hum-bly pray as we say words to for-give,  
we keep this prom-ise, yes in our souls to live.  
This verse sum-mons us to spread "God's gen-tle  
call",  
and ver-if-y the truth, giv-ing of our all.

Your true, peace-ful spir-it, our lives re-veal-ing,  
this will be a thor-ough, glor-i-ous heal-ing.  
Love, peace, and jus-tice from our God's Ho-ly Place,  
e-ter-nal con-se-quence comes, with truth and  
grace.

Re-spect per-sons, sex-ual o-ri-en-ta-tion,  
this must be ap-par-ent in ev-ery na-tion.  
May all wars and prej-u-dice-s tru-ly cease,  
so all, for-ev-er en-joy God's Di-vine peace.

Yes, GOD BECK-ONS US to mir-a-cles un-known,  
and off-ers us new wine, if we do not moan.  
The great-est thrill pos-si-ble to per-son-kind,  
now rest in wor-ship-ful joy, our soul to bind.

musical talents. After all, we are at the retreat and in worship, to give our own *personal best* to the Lord!

*Larry Pickering, GALA Music Coordinator*

### Something Old, Something New, Something Trailer, Bring the Dew

Reviving a tradition from GALA's past, the final night banquet at the International Retreat will be a themed banquet with entertainment. Todd Davison and Kip Dawson are planning a fabulous TRAILER TRASH BALL. Everyone is encouraged to come in costume. So bring your polyester, halter tops, trucker caps, dirty t-shirts and don't forget accessories like sun glasses, big purses and jewelry. The evening will begin with "classy" appetizers and drinks and then we'll have a lovely meal. After dinner, entertainment will feature the TRAILER TRASH TALENT SHOW and the Trailer Trash Drag Pageant culminating with the crowning of Mr. and Ms. Trailer Trash.

During the weekend we'll have some time for artsy-craftsy types to help create table decorations and costume embellishments. We'll also help with talent show acts if you need accompaniment or props. Let your imagination run wild and we'll help you realize your vision.

After a few days of meeting new folks and getting reacquainted with old friends, The Trailer Trash Ball will be a chance to let your hair down in a fun and festive creative environment. GALA has always been about support, encouragement, learning and FUN.

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## GALA Brochure

Just 'around the corner' is the NEW GALA brochure! We're proud of our heritage and where we are heading as we forge ahead and we want you to be proud too!

Soon to be released....the updated pamphlet will include a 'tear off' section for those interested in becoming members of GALA or to make a donation.

We anticipate having the pamphlet printed and ready for distribution during the 2009 summer round of Gay Pride activities across the country! The general release of the new publication will be mailed to each Community of Christ congregation in the United States, Canada, Europe and Australia as an outreach and information resource; quantities available upon request.

If you have an activity where you think the pamphlet would be beneficial, please contact us to receive copies.



We Share A Mission  
**GALA RETREAT REGISTRATION FORM**  
 September 4<sup>th</sup>- 7<sup>th</sup> 2009  
 Camp Doniphan, Excelsior Springs, Missouri

*Guest Ministry: Community of Christ President, Steven Veazey*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Phone: ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Will you need transportation from the airport? \_\_\_\_\_

**Flight Information:**

Airline: \_\_\_\_\_ Flight In: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Flight Out: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any special dietary needs? \_\_\_\_\_

Any Medical Concerns? \_\_\_\_\_

**Retreat Costs:**

**\$ 165 per person Early Registration-- before August 16th**

**\$ 175 per person Late Registration – after August 16th**

**\*\*Private room cost: \$10 per night per person/couple**

**What room would you like? Regular or Private\*\***

Mail registration to:

**GALA RETREAT**

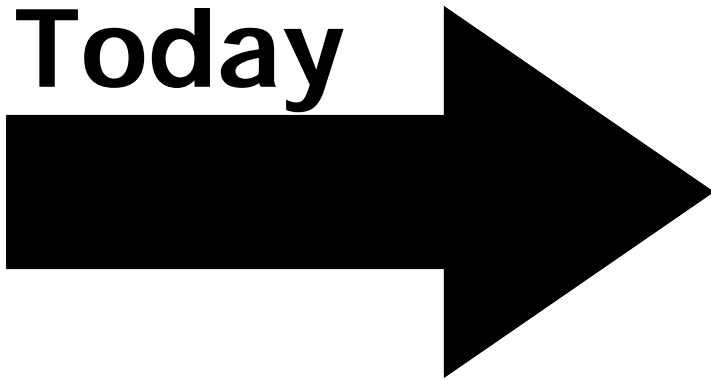
**P.O. Box 2173**

**Independence, Mo. 64055**

E-MAIL your registration info from this form to:

**mikechuckh@gmail.com**

# Join, Or Renew Your Membership Today



**2009 GALA Membership**

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

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

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

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

**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 2173  
Independence, MO 64055



**May 2009**

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Independence, MO 64055

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