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THE  LETTER

Serving members and friends of
Community of Christ

February 2018
Volume 31 Issue 1



Come and Join Us

Our annual GALA retreat will be held over Labor Day weekend again in 2018 (August 31 through September 3). We are going to be returning to Camp RedCliffe, outside Salt Lake City, Utah. You might ask why we're going back—we felt that it was important to support the young adults in the Salt Lake area who are dealing both with being members of the LGBTQ+ community as well as being seekers and/or new members of Community of Christ. We want to help strengthen them with our presence as they seek to reach out to many others who are hurting in their area.



NEW ADDRESS

GALA has a **new** post office box address. Please update your address book:

GALA
PO Box 16973
Kansas City MO 64133

The old post office box in Lapeer, Michigan, is no longer a working address.



TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

If you haven't renewed your membership for GALA yet, it's time to do that! We need your help and your input!

There's a membership form on the last page of this newsletter, or you can join online at <http://www.galaweb.org/membership5b.html>. There are several membership levels :

- Individual—\$25
- Household—\$40
- Limited income/student—\$10

GALA

Executive Board

Jerry M. Dale Jr. - President

jerry@galaweb.org

President-Elect

(Vacant)

Parker Johnson—Vice-President

parker@galaweb.org

Gayle Humphrey—Chaplain

gayle.humphrey@sbcglobal.net

Brittany Mangelson

Secretary

Brittany@galaweb.org

Pam Robison -

Under Secretary for Publications

pam@galaweb.org

John Billings—Treasurer

john@galaweb.org

Members At Large:

Clay Birks

clay@galaweb.org

Ginger Farley

ginger@galaweb.org

Visit us on the web

www.galaweb.org

President's Message

GALA BOARD RETREAT 2018— UNDER RE-CONSTRUCTION

Your GALA board met January 19th through 21st at the Temple in Independence, MO for some time of reflection of the past, updating ourselves on our present and dreaming about our future.

Our schedule was jammed packed. The retreat planning committee consisted of John, Parker, Brittany and me. Balancing the spiritual needs with the organizational needs was a delicate balance. Each day we held 3 devotions - each morning before we started, each day at 1pm the Temple Prayer for Peace and a closing devotion each night to re-ground us in our efforts. Day 1 was about sharing our stories, Day 2 was a day of dreaming about our future and Day 3 was our regular business meeting for January.

But what did you accomplish you ask?

We agreed there are 9 critical areas for our focus. They are: Mission and Purpose, Finances, Membership, Communications, Policies, Resources, Education, Events and Risk Management.

This year we are focusing on the following:

Mission and Purpose: Updating our internal and external brand image and evaluating a re-joining of GALA and WCN.

Communication: Developing and delivering stories and resources to you in a way that is most user friendly to you. The newsletter will be published in February, May, August and November.

Policies and Procedures: It's time to update our organizational by-laws to ensure we are using non-profit best practices and what makes sense for us. We are also putting together a "Pride Protocol" for congregations wanting to participate in LGBTQ+ pride events.

International Retreat Location: we will be returning to Camp Redcliffe outside of Salt Lake City, Utah. Save the dates of August 31st through September 3rd in the beautiful mountains of Utah.

Watch for more information on each of these initiatives in the coming months.

Yours in leadership
Jerry M. Dale, Jr.
President

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MEET JOHN BILLINGS, TREASURER

Greetings from San Antonio. I have been away for awhile and have missed everyone a lot. Those feelings became more real this past summer at the annual GALA retreat at Camp Red Cliffe, in the mountains of Northern Utah, outside of Huntsville.

Life circumstances sometimes call for us to take time off to wander a bit and some time to regroup and discover again where life is calling us to go and the future in which life is calling us to embrace. (After 26 years, I fully retired from appointee ministry in 2010. My wife, Sherry died in 2014 - we had been married for 39 years. And, I moved to Texas in 2015.) Being with GALA friends at the retreat (both new and old) was like coming home to family. I have deep gratitude for that experience. Those feelings of belonging and renewal were experienced again a couple of weeks ago when I attended the GALA Board Retreat in Independence. During an extremely busy couple of days, once again, I enjoyed those special feelings of welcome and renewed my understanding of the importance of GALA and the Welcoming Congregation Network.

I am not new to GALA. In 1986, I began my journey with GALA and became fully immersed in and dedicated to the mission of affirming the dignity and worth of all people and advocacy for change in the Community of Christ. And, over a lot of years, in the midst of tears, and often smiles and warm embraces the mission of GALA has been successful. Now, some 41 years later, my commitment continues as I have accepted the board responsibility of being the Treasurer for GALA. I am also renewing my involvement with the Welcoming Community Network as their 2018 Board President. I am excited and looking forward to the opportunity to serve and be involved with the important task of helping GALA live out its mission in the life of its members.

So, what does it mean to be the Treasurer for GALA? Of course, a treasurer has some specific responsibilities.

- Care for and be responsible for the funds of the organization.

- Manage and maintain those funds in a bank account as approved by the board.
- Make payments of funds as directed by the board and organization.
- Oversee the budget as approved by the organization and provide reports of income and expenses on a regular basis to the board and membership.
- Give direction to fund raising and donations to the organization.

These are basic tasks of the treasurer. But, I also see my responsibilities in a broader context. I am a member of the board which has the responsibility to provide leadership to GALA. It's about looking at the future of GALA and how best this organization can live out its purpose and mission. It is about providing welcome and a social venue for the GALA family. It is about having programs that will touch the lives of people at their points of need. And, its about interfacing with the Community of Christ as a supportive organization and as an advocate to ensure that the church is always a place of welcome where everyone has an equal opportunity to participate in the life of the church. It is about GALA being relevant to a diverse community of generations that I hope will want to be part of the GALA family. I believe that promoting, celebrating and achieving harmony, inclusion, and diversity will strengthen GALA and is vital to our mission. I look forward to 2018 and being part of the GALA experience of welcome, affirmation, diversity, and compassion.

—John Billings



FROM THEN TO NOW

When GALA started, it was a few people around a table deciding it would be a good thing to have a Gay and Lesbian group for RLDS members who were feeling disenfranchised by their communities and their church. We had no funding and no cooperation or sanction by the

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(continued from page 3—From Then to Now)

church. In fact, we were told that we could not use the name of the church in our correspondence.

We have come a long way. Now there is an apostle who is a liaison with GALA and the church. There are openly gay members who are being ordained in some congregations. Members who have had their priesthood taken away because they were gay have been reinstated.

Being on the GALA board and meeting with other members of the board have given me hope again. This board is looking forward to moving GALA forward without forgetting where we have come from and why we began. We still want to bring ministry to those who have been hurt and disenfranchised. I am excited to be a part of the GALA board!

—Ginger Farley



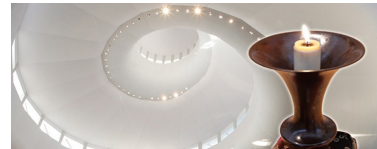
SAVE THE DATE!

President Steve Veazey will bring a challenge to the church in a webcast at 6:00 p.m. CDT on April 8. His message, which will be simultaneously translated into French and Spanish, will be followed by a live Q&A session.



PROJECT ZION

Have you listened to any of the Project Zion podcasts yet? Josh and Brittany Mangelson (board member) are doing a wonderful job of sharing stories from a variety of perspectives—and they would like to use some of the voices from GALA. If you would be willing to share your story, please contact Brittany at brittanymangelson@gmail.com



A PRAYER FOR PEACE

How long, O God? How long before we realize that each life is of worth? That the world we inhabit is incredibly diverse and beautiful? That we are not just consumers but are called to be stewards?

Forgive us, God.

We have looked for ways to divide into groups that call others “less than.” We have said that some lives are not as important as others. We have ignored the beautiful diversity you have created in humankind.

Forgive us, God.

We have trashed and misused your creation. We have exploited the earth’s resources, and we have hunted some species to extinction.

Forgive us, God.

We have decided that because we are humans, we can do anything we want—and we have ignored your call to be stewards of all you have given us. We have instead consumed to excess, leaving some with nothing while others have far more than they need.

Forgive us, God.

Remind us that we are dependent on each other—that what hurts one will ultimately harm all. Help us realize that we must be stewards or we will none of us survive.

We—all of us...humans, animals, our world, our planet...all of us yearn for the time when all the world will live in peace. Give us the courage to make it so.

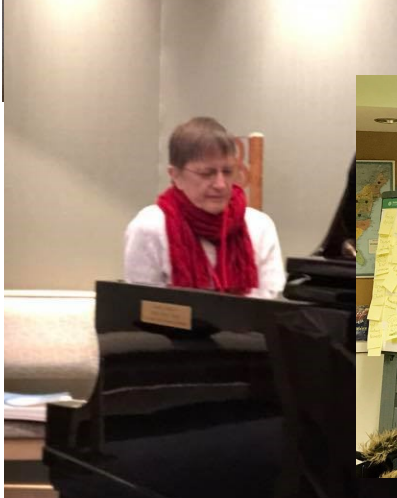
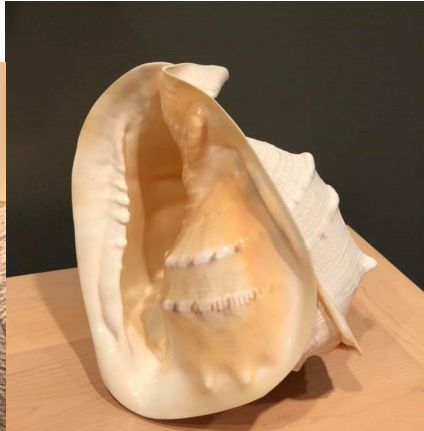
Amen.

—Pam Robison

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GALA BOARD RETREAT 2018 PICTURES





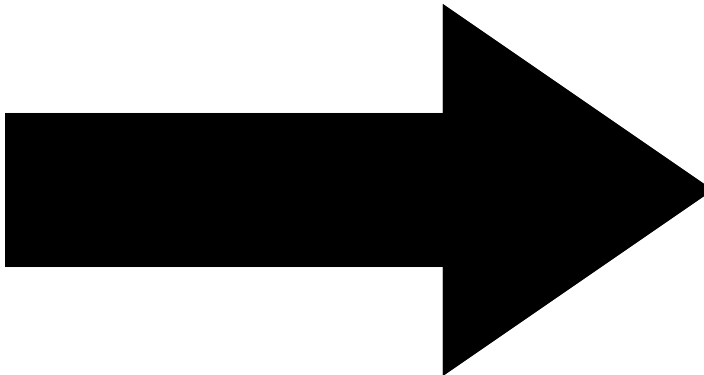
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Kansas City MO 64133

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



2018 GALA Membership

Name(s): _____

E-mail: _____

Address: _____

City,State,Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Membership Level (U.S. dollars):
 _____ Individual (\$25) _____ Family (\$40)
 _____ Student / 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: GALA
 PO Box 16973
 Kansas City MO 64133**

