

Setting a place at the table for persons of all gender expressions and sexual orientations.

From the Moderator

It has been exciting to serve as the Moderator of the Disciples LGBTQ+ Alliance Council for the past 20 months! We have accomplished much even as there is so much more to do.

First I'll mention our new name – Disciples LGBTQ+ Alliance. We are proud to proclaim this new name for the Alliance. This new name reflects 40 years of growing understanding of what it means to welcome all. When the name Gay, Lesbian and Affirming Disciples Alliance was first proclaimed 30 years ago it was a bold and controversial choice. I hesitate to claim that Disciples LGBTQ+ Alliance is a bold and controversial name, but I do believe that this name proclaims a prophetic witness to the Christian Church that we are moving forward and ever expanding our understanding of welcome and affirmation.

Justice

We continue to grow in our understanding that justice for LGBTQ+ people can only go hand in hand with justice for all people. We know that LGBTQ+ people come in all racial/ethnic groups, speak all languages, some have documentation, and some don't. It works the other way around too: we know that people of all racial/ethnic groups, languages, and documentation status come in all genders and sexual orientations. We cannot be a

church that welcomes all until we know that justice seeking for all is a core part of the work.

So this year, you see at General Assembly that Alliance Q has teamed up with Disciples Justice Action Network, Disciples Peace Fellowship, and Reconciliation Ministries as we witness for

justice together in the General Assembly exhibit hall. Alliance Q is committed to working

with these ministries and all justice seeking ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to build a just and inclusive church that welcomes all persons. As our General

Assembly proclaimed in 2013, we are striving together to become a people of grace and welcome to all.

Structure

This past 20 months we have also worked to rebuild the team structure of Alliance Q. The

Council is taking this step by step, knowing that we can't accomplish everything at once. We have

renamed our Pastoral Care and Education team. We are currently working to build up a Justice Response team. And Dr. Johnston, Executive Director of the Open & Affirming Ministry Program, is

I do believe that this name proclaims a prophetic witness to the Christian Church that we are moving forward and ever expanding our understanding of welcome.

The rainbow flag at First Christian Church, Lynchburg, VA, flies proudly—even after being stolen and replaced.



working to rekindle the Open & Affirming Ministry Team of the Alliance.

Speaking of the Open & Affirming Ministry Program, Dr. Johnston has developed a one day Building an Inclusive Church Toolkit training and would like to bring it to your church and region. If you want to see your church become Open & Affirming or if you want to know more about how to support churches in your region as they journey towards more welcome, let us know that it's time to schedule a training in your congregation or your region.

Finance

Speaking of trainings and resources, of course, leads to speaking about finances. Yes, we have some work to do. As you can see in this report, you our members gave \$20,000 less in 2016 than in 2015. We have been able to cut back in some areas, and we are spending down our bank balance this year. Dr. Johnston continues to accept a salary that is significantly less than our contract with him. We have also applied for a grant, but we are aware that grant money can come and go.

So I implore you: go to the Alliance Q website and set up a regular contribution. A monthly contribution of \$10 will make a

difference. Of course, you're welcome to give more!

And when you get back to your church, encourage giving to Alliance Q. Encourage your church family members to become members of the Alliance. and encourage your congregation to support the Alliance financially.

Future

As I look to the future for Alliance Q, I see revitalized teams that include you as partners in this ministry. I see a trained core of people walking with congregations on their journey towards becoming Open & Affirming. I see an increased understanding that justice and welcome only grow when all are included. Most importantly, I see a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) that is becoming a people of grace and welcome to all.

I thank all of you, our members and our supporters, for journeying with us in this work for justice, welcome, and affirmation.



Rev. Dan Adolphson
Council Moderator
Disciples LGBTQ+ Alliance

From the Executive Director of the Open & Affirming Ministry Program

We gather again at General Assembly and I rejoice at the progress we have made.

Another 25 congregations of the Christian Church are proclaiming their Open & Affirming status, and I know of several that are working to increase their welcome and affirmation. I am confident that there are many more increasing welcome that I haven't yet heard about.

More important than simply adding a congregation's name to a list, these churches have told me their stories. Stories about men and women, trans and cis, gay and bi and lesbian and straight, African American and Asian and Hispanic, who find that the welcome of all in an Open & Affirming congregation is so important to them. After all, if I don't know that you're welcome, how do I know that I'm welcome?

I also know that there is so much more work to be done. As I write this, *there are 157 Open & Affirming Congregations and 8 other Open & Affirming Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*. This is approaching 5% of the congregations listed in our Yearbook. True, 5% is a significant number, and I rejoice that so many LGBTQ+ Disciples have a safe, affirming place to call home. But I also hear so many stories of Disciples and others who need a place of welcome and affirmation. I hear stories of talented energetic seminarians who despair at finding a congregational call. I hear of young people, and not so young people, who are losing interest in church because of the

Members of Midway Hills Christian Church, Dallas, TX, showing their pride.



lack of acceptance and affirmation.

Striving to meet this need, I have learned a few things in the past four years working with you as the Executive Director of the Open & Affirming Ministry Program.

There is much welcome in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and there is also much room for growth.

To those churches that are welcoming LGBTQ+ people but

aren't yet on Alliance Q's list of Open & Affirming Ministries I say: *Your welcome mat belongs on*

the outside of your door, not inside. If your neighbors don't know that you are welcoming openly, they won't know the difference between your church and the gay-bashing congregation down the street. LGBTQ+ youth especially need to hear your message of welcome.

Have you checked the Alliance Q website to make sure your congregation is on the list of Open & Affirming Ministries?

To those who think their church isn't ready to become Open & Affirming I say: *Every church is ready to take one more step on the journey to more welcome and affirmation.* If you are sitting in the pew on Sunday morning thinking "I wish we were more open, more welcoming" then I say you are hearing God's call and it's time to respond. Alliance Q's Open & Affirming Ministry Program offers resources, trainings, and support to congregations seeking to increase welcome.

Have you checked the Alliance Q website for these resources?

And to those who belong to congregations on Alliance Q's list of Open & Affirming ministries I say: *Congratulations!* The welcome and affirmation you offer to your neighbors and the witness you make to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) are life giving and vital to so many.

And I ask: are you celebrating your Open & Affirming commitment at least once a year with a sermon, a Bible study, a party? Have you taken a second look at your Open & Affirming statement to make sure that

today it includes an explicit welcome of transgender and bisexual people? And are you striving to understand that welcome of all means, well, all! Are you striving to meet your neighbors and their need? The people of God come in all racial/ethnic groups, speak all languages, live in all levels of prosperity and poverty, come in bodies of all shapes and abilities, and are not divided by immigration status.

I often say, there's always a new neighbor to meet around the corner.

I know that Rev. Dan Adolphson, Alliance Q Council Moderator, and the entire Council are striving to increase understanding of the intersectional nature of our call to justice. I rejoice in that work and I work alongside them as I focus on Open & Affirming Ministry in the Christian Church. I know that we must engage this journey for intersectional justice

if we are to become a church that reflects God's welcome for all.

In the next two years I am striving to do two things as Executive Director of the Open & Affirming Ministry Program.

As always, I am working to provide congregations with trainings and resources that will enable them to continue their journeys towards welcome.

And over the past four years I have also learned that I can't do this work myself, so I am working to build up a volunteer base of trained members of Alliance Q to multiply this work.

Are you interested in doing this work with me?

I need people who will become familiar with our Building an Inclusive Church Toolkit so that they can support congregations in their region striving to become Open & Affirming.

I need people who can make phone calls as I pursue our Calling All Pastors project. (Yes, I have stumbled on this project by trying to do it all at once. I thank those who have helped me so far, and encourage those who are yet interested to be in touch with me.)

And I need eyes and ears on the ground who can connect the Open & Affirming Ministry Program with congregations in need of support and encouragement.

Interested? Let me know!

I rejoice in this journey. And it is a journey. Every step towards more welcome is progress. Thanks be to God!



Rev. Mark C. Johnston, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Open & Affirming
Ministry Program

Congregational Participation in the Alliance Q Membership Challenge

The Alliance Q Membership Challenge encourages congregations to sign up 10% of their membership as members of the Alliance. Only congregations that have accepted the challenge appear on this list.

For more information and to accept The Challenge, contact Mark Johnston at mark@disciplesallianceq.org

Met The Challenge: Above and Beyond

Downtown Disciples, Des Moines, IA, 15.4% (2 out of 13 members)

Fireside Christian Church, Aurora, CO, 10% (2 out of 19 members)

Edmond Trinity Christian Church, Edmond, OK, 10% (7 out of 70 members)

Meeting The Challenge

Central Christian Church, Indianapolis, IN, 9.0% (22 out of 244 members)

First Christian Church, Fullerton, CA, 5.1% (8 out of 156 members)

Welcome Table, Seattle, WA, 4.2% (4 out of 94 members)

Midway Hills Christian Church, Dallas, TX, 4.1% (9 out of 220 members)

United Christian Church, Levittown, PA, 3.7% (3 out of 82 members)

Compton Heights Christian Church, St. Louis, MO, 3.4% (3 out of 87 members)

First Christian Church, Minneapolis, MN, 3.2% (4 out of 125 members)

Little White Chapel Christian Church, Burbank, CA, 3.1% (2 out of 65 members)

Central Woodward Christian Church, Troy, MI, 3.0% (3 out of 101 members)

First Christian Church, Baltimore MD, 2.9% (2 out of 69 members)

All Peoples Christian Church, Los Angeles, CA, 2.0% (1 out of 51 members)

Franklin Circle Christian Church, 1.4% (2 out of 138 members)

First Christian Church, Orange, CA, 1.4% (5 out of 364 members)

National City Christian Church, Washington, DC, celebrates pride week in our nation's capital.



First Christian Church, Janesville, WI, 1.4% (1 out of 74 members)

Douglass Boulevard Christian Church, Louisville, KY, 1.3% (2 out of 160 members)

Brentwood Christian Church, Springfield, MO, 1.1% (5 out of 472 members)

Church of the Foothills, Santa Ana, CA, 0.9% (2 out of 222 members)

Central Christian Church, Terre Haute, IN, 0.8% (1 out of 126 members)

National City Christian Church, Washington, DC, .8% (4 out of 526 members)

Park Avenue Christian Church, New York City, NY, 0.7% (2 out of 275 members)

Thank You for your support!

The financial support of our members and congregations enable us together to build a church where all are welcome at the table.

Individual Giving in 2016

\$2000+

Bob and Pam Durrwachter, Charles City, IA; Jacquelyn Foster and David Boger, St. Louis, MO

\$1000 - \$1999

Bill Bailey, Fullerton, CA; Nancy Davis, Los Angeles, CA; Ben Bohren, Palm Springs, CA; Eugene Brink, Colorado Springs, CO; Robert Shaw and Susan McNeely, Indianapolis, IN; Dick and Mindy Hamm, Indianapolis, IN; Susan Jaquith, Silver Spring, MD; Bill and Mary Jacobs, Medford, OR; Linda and Michael McGowan, Morrisville, PA; Sharon Hart, Huntsville, TX; Karen and Wayne Barr, Springfield, VA

\$500 - \$999

Mark Johnston and Shannon Halkyard, San Francisco, CA; Joy Brittain and Elaine Harris, Marina, CA; Jeff and Jayne Zimmerman, Deerfield, IL; Wayne Sparrow, Eminence, KY; Patricia Hurley, Cambridge, MA; Margaret Rice, New York, NY; James and Olive Schimmel, Warren, OH; Robin Knauerhase, Portland, OR; D. Newell Williams and Sue McDougal, Ft. Worth, TX; Darnell Fennell, Missouri City, TX; Robert Fisher and John Bisceglia, Bellingham, WA

\$15 - \$499

And 321 other Alliance Q members and supporters in 2016!

I am thankful for the privilege of being able to support this vital ministry as we respond to the call of God upon the church to welcome all to the Table!!!

*- Sharon Hart,
former Open & Affirming Ministry
Team Leader*

Congregational Giving in 2016

Hope Central Church, Jamaica Plain, MA, \$1800

Compton Heights Christian Church, St. Louis, MO, \$1500

National Avenue Christian Church, Springfield, MO, \$1000

Canoe Camp Church of Christ, Mansfield, PA, \$955

Bethany Memorial Church, Bethany, WV, \$500

Brentwood Christian Church, Springfield, MO, \$500

First Christian Church, Minneapolis, MN, \$500

Midway Hills Christian Church, Dallas, TX, \$500

Central Woodward Christian Church, Troy, MI, \$500

Douglass Boulevard Christian Church, Louisville, KY, \$375

Monte Vista Christian Church, Albuquerque, NM, \$358

Cairn Christian Church, Lafayette, CO, \$354

First Christian Church, Lehigh Acres, FL, \$250

Southside Christian Church, South Bend, IN, \$200

Eastwood Christian Church, Nashville, TN, \$150

Central Christian Church, Indianapolis, IN, \$100

Pine Valley Christian Church, Wichita, KS, \$100

Rock Bridge Christian Church, Columbia, MO, \$100

Odyssey Christian Church, Tulsa, OK, \$100

Bethany Christian Church, Tulsa, OK, \$100

First Christian Church, Lansing, MI, \$100

Downtown Disciples: Unapologetically Progressive, Des Moines, IA, \$100

East Side Christian Church, Tulsa, OK, \$100

Niles Discovery Church, Fremont, CA, \$90

Our Finances

	Actual 2015	Actual 2016	Budget 2017
Cash on hand, start of year	\$21,711	\$32,495	\$21,150
Income			
Contributions	\$80,278	\$59,163	\$60,700
General Assembly* Banquet, Pre Assembly Event, Event Offering, etc.	\$1,255	\$0	\$17,475
Sales and other income Books, T-shirts, etc.	\$3,818	\$3,674	\$1,100
1st Cherokee Note**	\$10,050	\$10,235	\$10,356
Total Income	\$95,402	\$73,073	\$89,631
Expenses			
Council Expenses Leadership Retreat, Travel, etc.	\$4,794	\$1,024	\$3,750
General Assembly* Booth, Banquet, Pre Assembly Event, T-shirts, etc.	\$9,976	\$5,700	\$21,731
Open & Affirming Ministry Program Executive Director Compensation*** and Program Expenses	\$65,392	\$73,807	\$75,158
Administrative and Other Expenses Web Site, Printing, Banking, Credit Card Fees, Insurance, etc.	\$4,456	\$3,886	\$6,125
Total Expenses	\$84,619	\$84,418	\$106,764
Cash on hand, end of year	\$32,495	\$21,150	\$4,017 (projected)

Endowment Funds and Other Cash On Hand, December 31, 2016

(All funds invested with the Board of Church Extension)

Allen Harris Fund	\$3,259
GLAD Endowment	\$3,094
Cherokee Christian Church Notes**	\$20,959

* General Assembly Banquet expenses (ticket income and food costs) were handled through General Church ticket sales and not reflected in 2015 actual numbers but are included in 2017 budgeted numbers. 2016 General Assembly expense includes \$4,275 that will be reimbursed in 2017 by organizations sharing our booth.

** Funds contributed to the Alliance in 2014 when the church closed, to be spent over 5 years as requested by the congregation.

*** In the years 2015 and 2016 the Executive Director was paid \$18,312 & \$14,842 less than contract. Executive Director Compensation for 2017 is budgeted \$14,842 less than contract. In 2016 Dr. Johnston's vacation time was increased by 2 weeks in lieu of a raise. Dr. Johnston has agreed to accept these amounts as fulfilling his contract.