

November 2017

Hello Friends!

Our work together, building a just and inclusive Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), is moving forward. Thank you for your support of this life giving and life saving ministry.

Just a few of the things that we have accomplished this year:

- We have added 19 Open & Affirming Ministries to our O&A Ministry Program. This includes one seminary, the first O&A congregation in Alabama, and of course 8 more First Christian Churches.
- We have increased the visibility of our commitment to intersectional justice by organizing a 'social justice super-booth' at the General Assembly in Indianapolis. AllianceQ organized this space, including Reconciliation Ministry, Disciples Justice Action Network, Disciples Peace Fellowship, and the Alliance.
- We have provided several trainings using the excellent Building an Inclusive Church Toolkit, provided workshops at the General Assembly in Indianapolis, and I have been available to pastors across the church to provide suggestions and resources as they work to increase welcome in their congregations.
- Our AllianceQ leadership and members have joined in demonstrations for racial justice in St. Louis, against the Dakota Access Pipeline, at the Disciples Rally 4 Justice in Indianapolis, and we have marched for immigration rights in Washington DC.
- We have alerted Disciples via our Facebook page and newsletter of opportunities to sign letters and amicus briefs on important justice issues coming before our courts and legislatures.
- We have alerted Disciples to justice issues and ways we can respond via our Facebook page.

Many things continue to remind me how important this work is: the number of high school students who attempt suicide each year because they have been told they are damned for being lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender; the number of transgender people murdered each year; the number of new cases of HIV among our African American brothers, at a rate of four times the cases among white Americans, due to lack of information and health care and affirming support; the number of LGBTQ youth living homeless on our streets because their parents were told by churches to kick them out.

Yes, there is so much more work to do. I was dreaming 2 years ago that we would have 20% of Disciples congregations commit to O&A ministry by now. Yes, that would be 600 churches. Currently, there are about 160 congregations on the O&A list. But that dream is still alive because the need is still there.

Every single Open & Affirming church is another beacon of hope to people in need of welcome, affirmation, and hope.

So you're not surprised that as I thank you for your support in this work, I write to remind you of the ways you can support the Disciples LGBTQ+ Alliance and the Open & Affirming Ministry Program.

- I covet your prayers. Knowing that we stand together is vital.
- I ask you simply to remember that we are here. When you know of a church that is ready to widen its welcome, when you know of someone who could use some encouragement and pastoral support, when there is a justice issue that other Alliance members want to know about, let us know.
- Consider sharing your time and skill. We are working to build up the ministry and support offered by AllianceQ. We can use people to help us with our development. Perhaps you're interested in being part of our Pastoral Care and Education Team. Or do you want to be part of our commitment to intersectional justice? Let us know!
- I am personally focused on building up regional Open & Affirming Ministry Teams. Let me know if you're interested in helping to increase welcome in your Disciples region.

Finally, to accomplish this ministry, we need your financial support. Money enables us to provide trainings around the country. Money enables us to be present when justice calls. We can train more pastors and train more volunteers with more money.

In the past couple years, our income has kept up with our expenses, but our income has not expanded, which means we cannot expand our work. We are also nearly finished spending a \$50,000 grant we received 4 years ago, and must replace that money if we are to continue with our present level of ministry.

- Are you giving us a monthly or quarterly pledge? You can increase that by 5 or 10%
- You can start giving to us on a quarterly or monthly basis.
- You can simply renew your membership right now.
- You can encourage your church's board to send us a contribution before the year ends.

And yes, you can copy this letter and share it with your congregation and encourage your church family to become members of the Disciples LGBTQ+ Alliance.

You and your friends can join and contribute at <http://contribute.disciplesallianceq.org>. You can call or email me anytime for assistance.

I give thanks for your support and praise God for the mission that we accomplish together,

