

CELEBRATING THE JOURNEY: 20 GLAD YEARS & COUNTING

1979-1999

A HISTORY OF GLAD ALLIANCE INC.



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Twenty GLAD years... and counting

This booklet chronicles the gay/ lesbian/ bisexual/ transgender liberation movement within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) marking a 1979 St. Louis secret gathering as the beginning point. It was actually eight years later that the organization, Gay, Lesbian, and Affirming Disciples Alliance formed. From a grassroots gathering of folks seeking mutual support to development of a vital organization with structure and programs designed to educate and advocate for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered persons throughout the Church, each step along the way has required tremendous courage, thought, prayer and mutual support.

1977 Kansas City General Assembly

The 1977 Kansas City General Assembly of the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, faced several gay issues. The Assembly defeated a resolution opposing homosexuality as a lifestyle for Christians, referred to the General Minister and President a resolution calling on regions and congregations to deny ordination to gays and lesbians, and approved a study document on the issue. A riveting moment occurred when Carol Blakley of Caldwell, Idaho, stood at the microphone to read a coming out letter from her son. As she read she was ruled out of order because her time had expired; the person waiting to speak (Rev. James Stockdale) yielded his time to her so that she could finish reading the letter.

1979 St. Louis General Assembly

The St. Louis General Assembly approved a resolution that was in the

form of a report from the Task Force on Ministry of the General Board, agreeing that "The ordination of persons who engage in homosexual practices is not in accord with God's will If the Church ever comes to a conclusion concerning homosexuality which differs from those now held, the change will be the result of the transformation of insight through prayer, informed study and discussion rather than the result of votes on resolutions."

And behind the scenes... Planting the seeds of GLAD

Debra Peevey: I was at the first secret meeting for GLAD at the St. Louis General Assembly in 1979. We met off site and gave only our first names. We were trying to simply find each other. There was a little blurb about us in the Christian Century following the Assembly - I wouldn't give my name - but they spoke of me as a "press shy young lesbian." It was because the Blue Ribbon Panel had determined 'It was not within the will of God to ordain self avowed practicing homosexuals into Christian

To our GLAD friend in faith and partners in ministry we send our congratulations on your 20th anniversary and our blessings upon your years ahead!

-The United Church of Christ Coalition for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered Concerns

*May the rainbow of God's
love continue to bless
GLAD in its caring and
loving ministry.*

*-Allen W. Lee, Park
Avenue Christian
Church, New York City*

Ministry. Well, I was already out to my committee. So the Northern California region adopted the following policy: "We affirm that no one human condition can be an absolute barrier to ordination." So began the process of the Northern California Region ultimately becoming Open and Affirming.

Judith Hoch Wray: October 1979. I remember. We gathered, in a home somewhere in the suburbs of St. Louis. Clandestine, fearful and yet energized by the sheer number, so many that chairs and floor were filled with Disciples, clergy and laity. Aware that others had not heard the cautiously passed message to meet. Concerned that among us would be one who would betray us.

Each one in that room had a story. About being bisexual or lesbian or gay in a church that feared sexuality in general and us in particular. Personal stories about self or family or friends. Some of those stories have been told now. A few of us are "out" now, to friends, family and the church. Some have left both the closet and the church. And some who were in that room remain fearful to this day. (CROSSBEAMS, SPRING 1999)

1981

May: Christine Leslie ordained by University Christian Church, Berkeley, CA

June: Debra Peevey ordained by Lafayette Christian Church, Lafayette, CA

Stan Smith: When the Lafayette Christian Church ordained Debra Peevey it was [almost] the first time that a Disciples church had openly ordained a gay or lesbian person. Debra had been

our minister-in-training, was about to graduate from Pacific School of Religion, and with the approval of the regional Commission on the Ministry, she asked Lafayette to ordain her. We studied, talked, wrestled with, and tried to discern what was God's will. When the Board finally voted the overwhelming majority affirmed Debra's calling to ministry I am still proud to be her colleague in ministry. (CROSSBEAMS, FALL 1998)

1985 Des Moines General Assembly

Allen Harris: I remember arriving at the 1985 General Assembly in Des Moines a bit scared and a bit excited. I had just come out as being gay and was getting ready to begin seminary that fall. I remember seeing a handwritten sign on the message board for folks who wanted to talk about being gay and being Christian to meet on the steps at the fountain in the plaza at a certain time on a certain day. As I think about it, it may have only had a pink triangle on it and the time and place of the meeting. A few of us met, including Virgil Hall, Jaque Foster, Michael Schloff, and others. There was the atmosphere of hope and expectancy. The idea for a newsletter, later names Crossbeams, came directly out of that meeting.

Laurie Rudel: Some of marched in a peace rally to the state capitol. Walking side by side with Debra Peevey, carrying candles in the dark, we turned the corner and there was Carl Cobb, who had been too ill with AIDS to join the march, standing on the sidewalk with a lighted candle. It was one of those moments that rips your heart open.

Carl Cobb as told to Liz Lang: There was to be a gathering of gay and lesbian folk and then a march. I was too weak to walk with them, but I wanted to see these, my beautiful gay and lesbian brothers and sisters. So I stood on a street corner with my lighted candle and watched them pass by. I was so proud and filled with great love for them and hope for the Church that I love so much.

1986

Findlay Street Christian Church in Seattle became the first congregation to openly affirm the membership and full participation of gays and lesbians.

1987

First Issue of Crossbeams

Allen Harris: The very first issue of *Crossbeams* was produced in January while I was in Fort Worth, Texas, at Brite Divinity School. Michael Schloff in Roxbury, Massachusetts and Jacques Foster in South Bend, Indiana were instrumental in thinking through the shape of the newsletter and creating lists of names for who should receive it. The first few issues were cut-and-paste jobs, typed on the computer at the church where I served. I paid a printing firm in town to create the titles for the masthead and the articles, which were then pasted onto the master. Copies made at the local copy shop included two by the Rev. David Murray (anonymously), one by the Rev. Jacques Foster (anonymously), two by me, two copied articles and a resource list.

1987 First Pre-Assembly Event in Louisville

GLAD Alliance, Inc. becomes an organization

Meeting at the More Light Presbyterian Church immediately prior to the General Assembly, those assembled named the organization Gay, Lesbian and Affirming Disciples Alliance, formed the first Coordinating Committee, and named CrossBeams as the official newsletter.

Laurie Rudel: I remember the pre-assembly gathering in Louisville in 1987. It was by invitation only held in a local church. Judith Hoch Wray led us in a bible study. She made the scripture sing with grace. I believe we were studying one of the letters of Paul. Her understanding of and compassion for Paul, her love of the church, startled and surprised me. As part of a closing ritual we told our stories and placed candle in sand. By the end of the event the dandelight shone brightly on our faces. It seemed to light the path ahead that would lead from the informal to the formal organization of GLAD.

I remember Holly Beaumont, Candy Cox, Debra Peevey, and myself sitting in our hotel room and dreaming up names for this fledgling organization.

1987 Louisville General Assembly

Meanwhile, on the assembly floor, the delegates rejected a resolution which said that homosexuality was an unacceptable lifestyle for Christians.

Laurie Rudel: I remember that we

*Congratulations from
Robert and Adelle Lemon
of Berkeley-Richmond
Intercity Ministry, one of
the earliest Open and
Affirming
congregations.*

Our hearts, minds, and prayers are with you. May the next 20 years be even more productive than the last.

*-Debra Peevey and
Candy Cox*

wore pink triangles on the floor of the General Assembly. It seemed so bold and scary at the time. We held our first public gathering where we invited folks to attend an after-session and contribute to the vision and work of GLAD Alliance.

I remember Candy Cox standing at the microphone on the floor of the hall during speak-out, flanked on each side by an elderly couple from Oklahoma, parents of a gay son. Candy spoke with clarity and passion on behalf of all of us.

Debra Peevey: Candy was on the original GLAD Steering Committee. She stood up on the floor of the General Assembly to officially announce the formation of GLAD during the one-minute open speaker time. It was her voice, her strength, her courage that spoke the truth. In that hall of 8,000+ people you could have heard a pin drop. It was amazing. She then wore a pink triangle on her ID tag. People began pulling her aside immediately to confide their stories and their pain to her. She was an unofficial chaplain to the secret GLAD community. It was very moving as she would recount the stories late into the night.

1987

First GLAD chapter organized in Kansas City by O.D. Johnson.

1988

University Christian Church in Chicago approved a "Covenant of Openness and Affirmation" supporting gay and lesbian people in the church, including ordination.

1988 GLAD Event, Chicago

Twenty-five persons attended the second GLAD Event in Chicago.

Rev. Harvey Lord: At that time, we in GLAD were not certain that we could ask for and receive permission to use Disciple churches as meeting places. I was a pastor of University Church in Chicago and had been since 1970. In the early 70's, when Charles Bayer and I were the co-ministers, our congregation's leadership had responded positively when a group of seminarians from Chicago Theological Seminary asked to use our church dining room for a gay coffee house on Friday nights. That project went very well, and continued till the seminarians had graduated and gone and the University of Chicago, prodded by our example, had opened its doors for such projects. So I thought, "Why don't we entertain GLAD's Conference?" I met no opposition when I invited GLAD to have its first sizable national gathering at University Church. And what a meeting it was! It was like taking the cork out of a bottle of champagne. How many pent up feelings were released. There was the delight of being invited into the heart of the life of a church congregation including using GLAD members to lead worship and to preach. One conferee surprised us all by coming out while taking part in that leadership! The congregation was honored at her trust.

There was the satisfaction of the discovery that there were a sizable number of gays, lesbians and others who had been loyal church members all their lives. Although there were accounts of being maligned and abused, no one seemed in a mood to leave the church. There was just the wholesomeness of people who in the process of sharing life experiences spontaneously becoming a listening and

support group for each other.

Society for so long had been talking about gays and lesbians as weird and strange that I was pushed to ask myself, "Are these people weird?" Society was wrong. This was a group of wholesome and normal young and older adults, as lovable as any adults I knew. Despite the prejudices they had suffered they were not nursing bitterness. They were simply looking for love and respect from our church in response to the love and loyalty they were giving it. It was wonderful.

1989

Coordinating Committee appoints regional contact persons & develops official relationship with the United Church Coalition for Lesbian/Gay Concerns.

1989 Indianapolis Pre-Assembly Event

Sixty people attended the GLAD pre-assembly event.

1989 Indianapolis General Assembly:

Becoming A Visible Presence

And we were very visible at that Indianapolis assembly! The new GLAD symbol, the Disciple chalice superimposed on a pink triangle, marked buttons and brochures and a large banner. We had two booths in the exhibit hall, one for GLAD and one for Open & Affirming Congregations. We led an interest group and an after session. We had an informal dinner and an ad hoc choir which sang after business sessions. We hoisted a banner that read, "The Body of Christ is Living

with AIDS" and we held an AIDS prayer service. We celebrated the General Assembly's approval of a resolution calling the Church and its members to treat persons with AIDS as children of God and to "act as instruments of God's compassionate love and tender care where the seeds of fear, prejudice and alienation have been sown." That assembly marked an important milestone in GLAD history. There were some rumblings about permission given us for the booths in the exhibit hall and the Disciple chalice on our logo, but our Assembly presence has continued ever since.

1990

Indianapolis Chapter Holds First Meeting

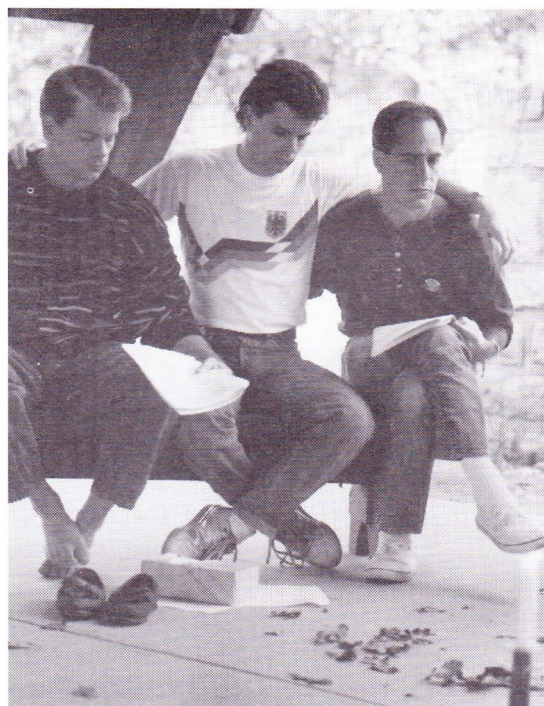
1990 GLAD Event at Tall Oaks, near Kansas City

Forty people from fourteen states attended the Event. An offering of \$600 was divided between Basic Mission Finance, the John Dale Humbert Memorial AIDS Research Fund and the Week of Compassion.

Controversy grows as visibility grows. It was a time of growing controversy expressed in letters to the editor of *The*

May God continue to bless the work you do!

-With love from The Oasis — working for justice since 1989.



Tall Oaks, October, 1990



*Singing, singing for our
Lives. Tulsa, 1991*

*Congratulations GLAD –
MEMORIES – anger, frus-
tration, prayers, healing
hugs, community, and
trust. Through our pain at
Michael's defeat, we rose
from the ashes with his
example and our love.*

-E. Carol Blakley

*Disciple Magazine. Some people voiced
their disapproval of articles in the
magazine affirming gay and lesbian
Disciples and ads, including one by
GLAD. The Disciple replied in an
editorial: "On questions where there is a
sincere difference within the church on
a moral issue, the magazine is not
inclined to rule that one party to the
question cannot advertise. The editor
feels that he cannot bar advertising any
more than he can bar debate
within the pages when the issue
at hand in the advertising is one
in contest before the church."*

1991 Pre-Assembly Event, Tulsa, Oklahoma

With eighty-five persons present,
this was the largest Event yet.

1991 Tulsa General Assembly

The Tulsa General Assembly is remem-
bered as the one in which Michael
Kinnamon was not elected as General
Minister and President.

Laurie Rudel: I remember that the
deep disappointment over the defeat of
Michael Kinnamon as General Minister

and President led us to sing in the hall
outside the arena as an underground
guerilla choir. I choose to direct hymns
that I love such as "Leaning on the
Everlasting Arms," "Jesus Loves Me,"
"Amazing Grace," and "Standing on the
Promises," because I believe the truth,
grace and power of those old hymns. We
began as a small group and as each
person came to stand with us the
semicircle grew larger and larger and
larger until an official charged with
keeping the hallways clear came to me.
Chagrined at his mission and sympa-
thetic with our actions he said we could
sing but that we needed to "straighten"
out the group so as to not block the flow
of people. Upon relaying this informa-
tion to the choir we laughed over the
sheer impossibility of this request.

Liz Lang: Later that same day, in the
after-session sponsored by GLAD, people
kept coming and coming into the little
room we'd reserved. We moved chairs



Ft. Worth, July '92.

closer together, found more chairs to
squeeze in, and then arranged for the
movable wall to be opened into the next
room. Over 200 people attended that
evening. And GLAD's membership
increased by 200% in the next few days.
We were definitely visible!

1992 January Council Meeting

Allen Harris: On a funny note, I remember the GLAD Alliance Coordinating Council retreat in Berkeley, California in January because of some of the hilarious antics of the group, especially Chuck Carpenter. It was in a small coffee shop in Berkeley that I found out the difference between regular coffee, espresso, cappuccino, and a cafe au lait! Little did I know that at the very coffee shop, when we were trying on each others' rings, that the other council members were secretly trying to discover my ring size so that they could present me with a ring for my ordination, which was held in May of that year. What a joyous surprise!

1992

GLAD Alliance, Inc. incorporated in Indiana on March 18

1992 GLAD Event in Ft. Worth

Fifty members and friends celebrated the GLAD Event on the Texas Christian University campus. Chris Glaser and Dr. William Nichols addressed the meeting. Now incorporated as a nonprofit organization we adopted the Design and Covenant as our bylaws. An eight-member Council replaced the seven member Coordinating Committee.

1993

The March on Washington for Gay, Lesbian and Bi Equal Rights



St. Louis, '93

included about eighty members of GLAD from all over the country. GLAD-Capital Area at National City Christian Church hosted.

1993 Pre-Assembly Event in St. Louis

held jointly with the UCC/LGC In July GLAD Alliance and the United Church Coalition for Lesbian/Gay Concerns met

together on the campus of Washington University in St. Louis prior to the historic "Common Gathering" of the Disciples' General Assembly and the General Synod of the United Church of Christ.

Laurie Rudel: I remember during our pre-assembly gathering that Wayne Sparrow gave the communion meditation. And we were blessed by this gay elder from a small town in Kentucky.

1993 St. Louis General Assembly

The Alliance and the Coalition jointly sponsored a booth in the exhibit hall, held a banquet, formed a choir and led an after session. A resolution calling on

Dear GLAD members and friends: I was there, at a distance, when you were born. Through your courage, perseverance, education and presence I have come to know and love you. Your spirit continues to sustain me as I discover new gifts and possibilities in my life and ministry.

*Rev. Kay L. McFarland,
GLAD-Florida*

St. Louis, '93 AIDS Memorial Service



Congratulations on GLAD Alliance's 20th anniversary! Our church became Open and Affirming in 1995 — a continuing religious growth and educational experience weaving us together in love.

-United Christian Church, Levittown, PA

Carol's quilt for her son.



governments at all levels to enact laws protecting the civil rights of gay, lesbian and bisexuals was approved by the General Assembly by a two-to-one margin. Dr Richard L. Hamm was elected to serve a six-year term as General Minister and President; his prior affirmations of gay, lesbian and bisexual Christians, including ordination, generated some debate, but little controversy, for he was elected by a big majority. GLAD sponsored an interest session, a debate, on homosexuality.

1994 GLAD Event in Burlingame, California.

With InterPlay leaders Phil Porter and Cynthia Winton-Henry, fifty people danced their faith throughout the weekend. Bill Bailey and Randy Palmer were given awards.

Laurie Rudel: Phil Porter and Cynthia Winton-Henry created a story-dance about communion and suddenly we were surrounded by the largest loaf of bread in the world and we are all included under the umbrella of this bread. For that afternoon the church, made large and expansive, held us in grace. At that same retreat I remember the rocking chair. I can still hear the

stories as one by one folks walked to the chair, took a breath, let it out, rocked back and forth and then began to tell their stories. I remember doing a "contact duet" with Marc S. from Park Avenue Christian Church. Marc appeared to me to be so fragile at the time, so light of body with a slight tremor in his limbs. In tenderness we gently leaned against one another, our bodies making shape after shape, holding, releasing, supporting. A dance of grace.

One of the requirements of GLAD Alliance business meetings is that the bylaws are read as a matter of course in the annual meetings. At that time Annual meetings had a quality of unpredictability and a small tendency toward contentiousness. I remember that I was to lead that particular meeting in 1994. Holding the rather plush and stuffed adopted lesbian Koala daughter of Alan Foster and Gerry Brague I sang the bylaws in Gregorian Chant. The meeting seemed a little lighter that year.

1994

GLAD members led Family & Friends workshops for the CWF Quadrennial

1995 Pre-Assembly Event in Pittsburgh

1995 Pittsburgh General Assembly

Ron Nyswaner, screen writer for the movie "Philadelphia," royally entertained the banquet audience. Banquet servers gave up their meals to feed the overflow crowd.

Warmest congratulations on 20 years of showing us the way. Your leadership, determination, love and commitment has been our inspiration. Thank you!

*St. Andrew Christian
Church, Olathe, Kansas*

1996 GLAD Event, Santa Fe

Remember: Georgia O'Keefe paintings, Kelly Kirby in a pleated mini-skirt, carpooling to worship at Holly Beaumont's church.

1997

Disciples Justice Action Network formed. Randy Palmer (GayLawyer) represented GLAD in the development of DJAN.

1997 Pre-Assembly Event, Denver

A joint meeting with Disciples Peace Fellowship preceded the half-day Event. Open & Affirming Ministries Program Advisory Committee approved by members.

1997 Co-published "Claiming the Promise," Bible Study on Homosexuality

1997 Denver General Assembly

The Assembly voted to name homosexuality as a topic for discernment by the whole church.

1998

Co-published **Open Hands** with other g/l/b/t church organizations

The accomplishments of GLAD during these two decades has often seemed slow and painful, but certainly they are far beyond the expectations of those who first met in secret twenty years ago. Forty congregations and regions have declared themselves to be open to and affirming of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered persons. We produce two publications. We have participated in several ecumenical ventures, including the publication of **Open Hands** and the Bible study, **Claiming the Promise**. We have been a very visible presence during General Assemblies and carried on a continuing dialogue with denominational leaders. Ordination of gay and lesbian ministers is happening more often, and it is easier to find a welcoming congregation in an unfamiliar town. Some ministers are blessing committed relationships. With the designation of homosexuality as an issue of discernment on the part of the general church, the ministry of GLAD to the church takes on a new dimension.

Special Recognitions

In 1993 the GLAD Alliance Council created four award categories as follows:

The Carol Blakley Recognition, named for Carol Blakley of Caldwell, Idaho, a Disciple mother of a gay son, who broke the silence at the 1977 Kansas City General Assembly and called on all Disciples to name the reality that gay, lesbian, bisexual and affirming persons are our sons, daugh-

ters, brothers, sisters, parents, congregants, pastors and staff.

This award is given to a member of the Alliance who has contributed significantly to the call on Disciples to name the reality which Mrs. Blakley dared to name, to the other purposes of the alliance and to the growth and development of the Alliance within the general manifestation of the church.

Mrs. Blakley was the first recipient of this recognition which was given at the Alliance Aftersession during the 1989 Indianapolis General Assembly. Other recipients include Dr. Michael Kinnamon, 1993, and Dr. William (Bill) Nichols, 1995.

The Rev. O.D. Johnson Recognition, named for the late Rev. O.D.

Johnson of Kansas City, Missouri, a retired Disciples clergyman who came out of the closet upon retirement and founded GLAD-Kansas City in 1987 as the first Alliance chapter.

This award is given to individuals or groups who contributed significantly to the development and growth of an Alliance chapter or the visible presence of the Alliance within the regional manifestation of the church.

Rev. Johnson was the first recipient of this award which was given during the 1990 Kansas City Event. Other recipients include Susan Jacquith, 1993, and Bill Bailey, 1994

The Peevey/Harris Recognition,

named for Rev. Debra Peevey of Seattle, Washington, and Rev. Allen Harris of New York, New York. Rev. Peevey, former pastor of Findlay Street Christian Church in Seattle, came out as a lesbian to her congregation and subsequently lead them through the process of becoming Open and Affirming in 1987. Rev. Harris, co-pastor of Park Avenue Christian Church in New York, was called to that congregation and ordained as an openly gay clergyman and subsequently helped lead them to become Open and Affirming in 1992. Both were original members of the Coordinating Committee of the Alliance.

This award is given to individuals or groups who contribute significantly to leading their congregations to become Open and Affirming or who contribute significantly to the visible presence of the Alliance within the congregational manifestation of the church.

Rev. Peevey was the first recipient of this recognition, which was presented at the 1991 Tulsa Event prior to the Tulsa General Assembly. Rev. Harris was the second recipient of this award, which was given at the 1992 Fort Worth Event.

The Rev. Michael Schloff Recognition

is named for the late Rev. Michael Schloff of Boston, Massachusetts for the purpose of recognizing him posthumously. Rev. Schloff, an openly gay Disciples clergyman, died of AIDS-related pneumonia in the fall of 1988. At the time of his death he was an original member of the former Alliance Coordinating Committees.

He is credited with furthering the formation of the Alliance through his efforts during the 1985 Des Moines General Assembly. Michael was best known in the Boston area as a powerful advocate for the homeless and disenfranchised and for his work on the staff of the gay and lesbian counseling center.

This recognition is given to individuals or groups who demonstrate the powerful Christian commitment of lesbian, bisexual, gay and affirming Christians to all persons within and without the church. Recipients have included Randy Palmer, 1994, and Jon and Melba Lacey, 1997.



*Many blessings to all in
GLAD Alliance. You have
been a support to
our church community
throughout our journey.
We are thrilled to be part
of the celebration; and
we pledge to continue to
stand with you.*

*-Findlay Street Christian
Church, Seattle*

Naming the Coordinating Council members

GLAD has been instrumental in opening the eyes of many within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Here is to the celebration when full inclusion is an every day reality!

*Millie Magner,
University Christian
Church, Seattle
Washington*

In 1987 five clergy persons were appointed to serve as the Coordinating Committee. This was later enlarged to seven members and later became the GLAD Council with eight members. Those who have served include:

Judith Hoch Wray, Jacque Foster, Diane Moore, Debra Peevey, Michael Schloff, Allen Harris, Chuck Carpenter, Randy Palmer, Toni Bynum, Tina Heck, Laurie Rudel, Wayne Sparrow, Mark Anderson, Jon Lacey, Holly Beaumont, Karol Cooper, Kelly Kirby, Pat Bunton, Roger Wedell, Liz Lang, David Downing, Luan Channels, Belva Brown, Jordan Galen Carpenter, Jeff Zimmerman, Greg Kubiak, Eugene Brink, Moe Caryl, Mary Jacobs

Laurie Rudel: As a member of the Council for five years (1990-1995). I remember the endless phone calls by

conference call. They rarely lasted less than two hours no matter who led the meetings! Two hours on a conference call can be frustrating yet in spite of that bonds formed and work took place.

Now I have an image of all these lines of communication crossing and re-crossing across the country, across time zones and varied locales: sophisticated and urban New York, very small town and gracious Kentucky, hip northern California, university town intellectual and activist Michigan, conservative Bible-belt Oklahoma, hugely tolerant and laid-back Seattle times two, upright and proper metropolitan Iowa. Together we worked and played and maintained connections between annual gatherings. Always trying to do more than was humanly possible out of love and affection for one another and for this group within the church seeing voice and visibility.

Crossbeams, too, grows and changes

We're glad to be part of an alliance that welcomes everyone. Thanks, GLAD, for all your work.

*Southside Christian
Church (Disciples of
Christ) South Bend,
Indiana*

Allen Harris: *Crossbeams* really took off in January of 1990 when Dick Spurlock agreed to do the production of the newsletter, and by December of 1990 you could clearly see Dick's wonderful artistic imprint on it. By the May 1991 issue the hard work and inspiration of Jon Lacey, who would later become the

editor of *Crossbeams*, was made evident. The October 1991 issue was the first to use 8 1/2 x 17 inch paper, folded, and the newsletter found its

current format, including two colors a dynamic new masthead, and a front sidebar in the May/June 1996 issue. Liz Lang, Tina Heck, and Moe Caryl have also served on the Editorial Board.



were an inspiration to all of us. At the 1989 General Assembly an Interest Group was offered to assembly-goers allowing folks to speak with members of these and other congregations about what it would mean to be open to and affirming of lesbian and gay persons. During this time local congregations made themselves known to the GLAD Alliance leadership that they were, in fact, Open & Affirming. Our list began to grow. It was not until the pre-assembly event at the 1991 General Assembly in Tulsa, Oklahoma, however, that GLAD Alliance officially created the Open & Affirming Ministries Program with

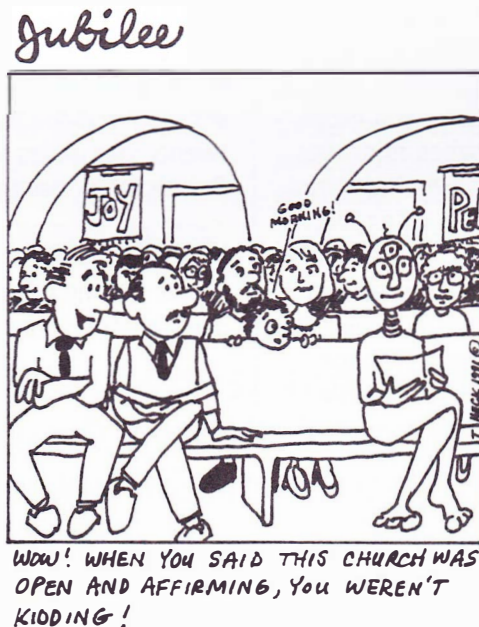
Developer of O & A Ministries.

Founding Open & Affirming Advisory Council members include Gerry Brague, Aeros BeAnda, Jeff Zimmerman, Pamela June Webb, Mary Jacobs, Cheryl Breiner, Mark Johnston, and Allen Harris.

Check out names of all the O & A congregations and ministries on the ribbon that weaves through this booklet.

Judith Hoch Wray: "October, 1999. We will gather to remember. In places visible to all. And yes, in secret places, as well."

-Debbie Gerkin, Fireside
Christian Church,
Denver, Colorado



Dear GLAD,

Congratulations for 20 years of excellence as you move public awareness into the Light of Love. You are leading a great social revolution!

*- Jayne P. Huybensz,
Alpharetta, Georgia*

Your request for contributions to the anniversary publication was an opportunity for me to reflect on my 2 1/2 year intentional journey. It has been a good, and very repentant, path toward wholeness for me. I've touched a joy and been healed, I like to say. Thank you GLAD, for making yourselves visible to the church for all of our healing.

Thank you for your ministry and hospitality toward me, even when mine was lacking toward you. My listening to you was a first step in acknowledging that my understanding needed your ministry; your ministry has liberated me; and so for your ministry I give thanks. The beautiful African word sums it up for me: Ubuntu, meaning "I am because

we are," points to the truth that I can be a person only through relationships with other persons and my humanity is bound up and inextricably linked with yours. (UPPER ROOM 1998)

We here at Jeffersontown Christian Church in Louisville are taking our first baby steps in intentionality by just finishing a study by the elders of Homosexuality and the Bible. Eighteen to twenty-four elders have attended each of five monthly meetings.

May the love of God, the Grace of Jesus Christ and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Lorraine Steele

A Call to Justice

By Richard L. Hamm

General Minister and President, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Twenty years have seen a tremendous change in the Christian Church in its openness to sexual minorities. Much yet remains to be done. Thank

*God for GLAD Alliance.
-Disciples Justice Action
Network, Harvey Lord,
coordinator*

Congratulations upon GLAD's twentieth Anniversary! I have a deep appreciation for all of you who comprise this important organization. I have found you to be very helpful in understanding very complicated issues and you have offered this help to the church in a way that is very conciliatory and that seeks to "maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

My vision is for us Disciples to become a church that manifests three marks of faithfulness: a deep Christian spirituality, true community, and a passion for

justice (based upon Micah 6:8, "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with your God"). It is not enough for us to manifest one or another of these marks in all we do, we should seek to hold these three together. Thus, I believe any strategy for dealing with the issue of homosexuality should hold together spirituality, community and justice.

This means, first, that the conversations should take place in a context of the spiritual disciplines, a context that takes the Scriptures seriously and that is

rooted in prayer and a genuine desire to discern the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This desire to seek the guidance of the Spirit must be stronger even than our desire for justification of our self or our own will.

Second, the conversation should take place in a way that honors the community and "maintains the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Ephesians 4:3). The honest truth is that good, sincerely Christian people disagree in this matter. Thus we must live graciously with one another and not seek to force our point of view on one another as members of the body of Christ. Who must be the most gracious?

Those who are most convinced that they are right!

Third, the conversation must make justice its aim.

Any notion of the Gospel of Jesus Christ that ignores God's deep desire for justice is less than adequate. Any attempt to "keep peace" at the expense of justice will result in less than the community of shalom God desires the church to be.

Table is a good image to use for this process in a church whose life is centered in the Table of our Christ. When some people are absent from the conversation they are easily reified (turned into things and no longer regarded as people). In regard to difficult issues people on each end of the spectrum tend to be excluded and reified by those on the other end. The process of discernment will provide an intentional, disciplined means by which every body

gets to the table and is able to be heard as well as to hear.

Why is it so difficult to hear one another in regard to the issue of homosexuality? I think it is because our sexuality is a point of such great vulnerability for most us. Most of us carry deep wounds and anxieties around it. Thus it is almost impossible to have an objective conversation about sexuality. Both when we speak and when we hear we tend to project our own woundedness and anxiety onto conversation. And yet these things are so deeply rooted in us that most of us do not realize that we are projecting (this is something shared by persons of all orientations!). This is one

reason why it is important for the conversation to take place within the Christian community,

wherein we hold each other accountable for our projections.

It is my deep hope that as the church addresses issues of human sexuality that we will both frame the conversation and conduct ourselves in way that holds together deep Christian spirituality, true community, and a passion for justice as befits a people of the Table.

I am grateful to GLAD for your patient and loving struggle with and for the church. Yours is an essential voice in this historic and crucial conversation. May the next crucial years bring us all to go deeper into discernment of God's desires for the church of Jesus Christ and for all God's people.

A twenty-year commitment to keeping and claiming God's unconditional love of all persons, including bisexual, lesbian, transgendered and gay folk, is GOOD NEWS!

*-Jeffrey D. Zimmerman,
Skoee, Illinois*

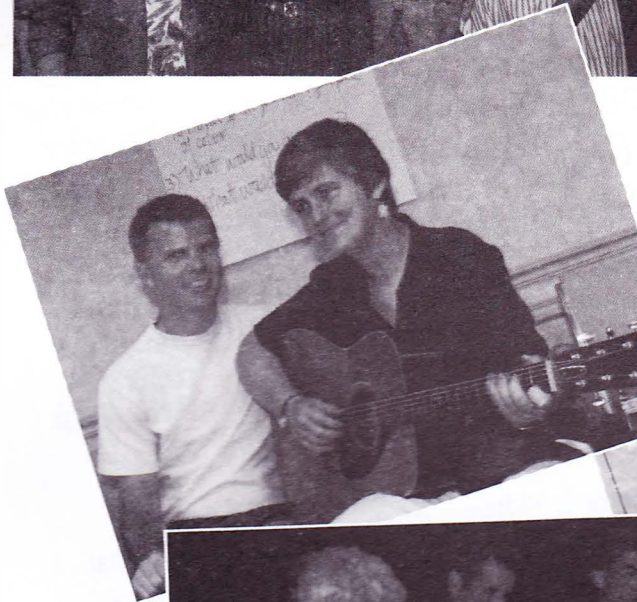
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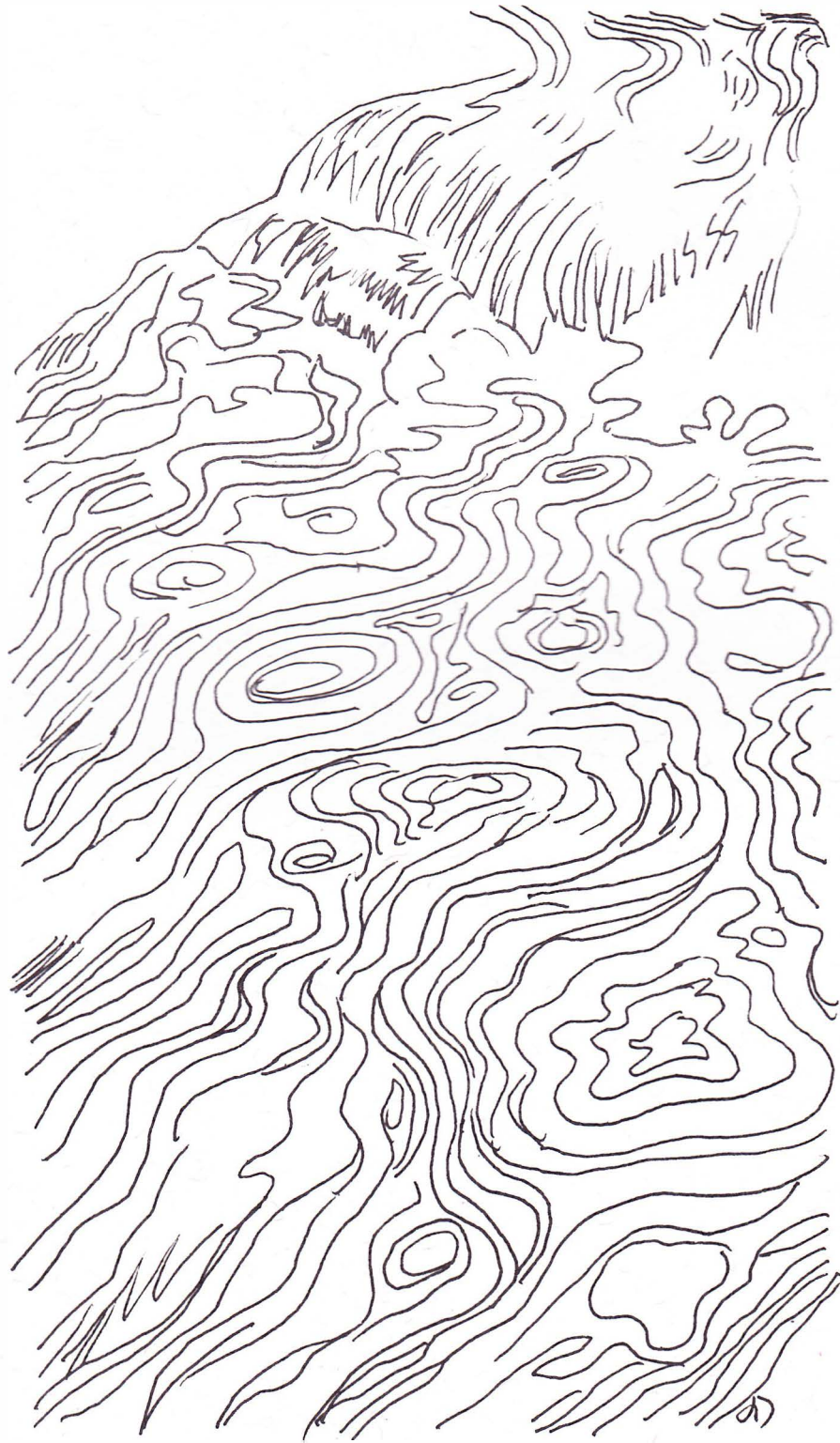
Bethlehem Church, Brooklyn New York



My life has forever been
positively enhanced and
undoubtedly blessed by
being part of an organi-
zation so committed to
God's all-inclusive love.
Thanks, GLAD.

-Karol Cooper



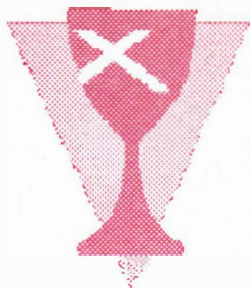


Let justice roll down like waters, and
righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

Amos 5:24

"The gay and lesbian movement is one of the most important
gifts of grace God has given the church."

...Rita Nakashima Brock



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