



# Report from the GLAD Alliance

July 2013 - July 2015

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

## From the Moderator

Together we have made a difference in these past two years.

As of this writing, GLAD has added 38 ministries to the Open & Affirming Ministry Program since the last General Assembly in Orlando. Included in this list are the first African American congregations and the first two Disciples seminaries to join: Brite Divinity School and Christian Theological Seminary.

This is nearly double the rate of ministries added in the previous biennium. We added 20 ministries to the Open & Affirming Ministry Program between the 2011 and 2013 General Assemblies.

There are currently 144 Open & Affirming Ministries in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Open & Affirming Ministries are making a difference.

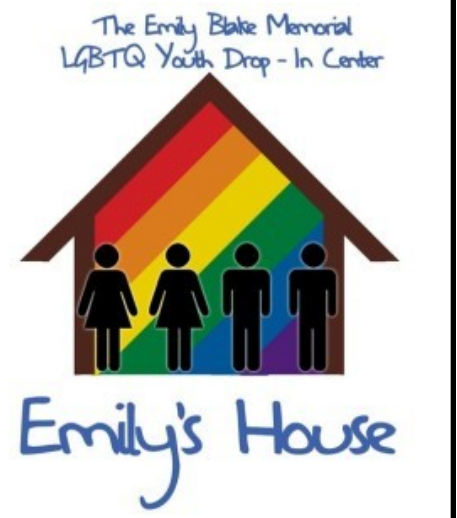
Along with encouraging our Disciples congregations and ministries to welcome all, GLAD and the Open & Affirming Ministries Program have worked for justice for all and equal rights for LGBT people.

Disciples O&A congregations have observed Transgender Day of Remembrance. Disciples O&A

congregations have provided safe space from bullying to youth. O&A congregations have supported other congregations along their journey to ever widening welcome. Disciples O&A congregations have welcomed families with transgender children. Our O&A

welcoming ministry after attending a workshop on Open & Affirming ministry hosted by GLAD and an O&A congregation. More Disciples regions and congregations are ordaining openly LGBT persons to ministry. It was July 2013 when we called Rev. Mark Johnston, Ph.D. as

*Like other O&A Congregations providing safe space for LGBT and other bullied youth, United Church of the Valley in Murrieta CA created Emily's House as a drop in center to provide safe, non-judgmental, religion-optional support to all youth: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, and straight, plus their friends and family.*



congregations have hosted workshops focused on so-called religious freedom laws, educating members on the dangers of these laws and how we can work to defeat them. Same gender weddings have been celebrated in Disciples O&A congregations. Our congregations have worked to move our country to a place where all can marry and all marriages are valued. A Disciples Army Chaplain, member of an O&A congregation, wrote his own O&A statement for his

Executive Director of GLAD's Open & Affirming Ministry Program. The presence he has shared with the church, the resources he has provided, and the guidance he offers have been valuable beyond measure. Dr. Johnston has been present at Regional Assemblies across the country. He set up an exhibit table at the National Convocation Biennial and presented workshops at the North American Pacific Asian Disciples Convocation: firsts for GLAD

presence at those events. You can read more about his activities elsewhere in this report.

I'll close with a thank you to our members. Without you there wouldn't be a GLAD Alliance to transform the Christian Church into a place where All Means All. I appreciate every contribution, from the \$15 student membership to the \$49,000 contribution from an O&A congregation that closed its doors last year.

And we need more support than ever. We called Dr. Johnston two years ago and he continue to work for us for approximately \$20,000 less than the agreed upon salary. He has graciously agreed to accept this amount as fulfillment of his contract, but we do want to continue to shrink this gap as quickly as we are able. Your annual membership dues, your ongoing monthly and quarterly pledges, your congregational giving all add up. I ask you to take your giving up a notch: join the Alliance if you're not a member; make an ongoing pledge if you haven't done so; encourage your church to participate in our membership drive; and encourage your congregation to take an offering for GLAD and to give out of the mission and outreach budget. Whatever your level of support, I thank you for joining us on this journey of welcome.



Karen Barr  
Moderator  
GLAD Alliance Council

## From the Executive Director of the Open & Affirming Ministry Program

What a privilege it has been to work with you these past two years.

Since I accepted this call in July of 2013 we have accomplished much. As of this writing, we have added 38 new Open & Affirming ministries including two Disciples seminaries, a campus ministry, and the first African American congregations to join GLAD's

***No matter where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.***

*Really, I mean that.*

*Liberal, Conservative, Independent, and Apathetic.*

*Fat, Skinny, In-between and Struggling.*

*Atheist, Christian, Jew, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Agnostic, Pagan, Heathen, and None.*

*Seeing a theme here? If I left you out, know that I include you.*

*Gay, Straight, and Everything in Between.*

*Church Going and Church Avoiding.*

- Jonathan Fisher, Army Chaplain, wrote this statement of affirmation and posted it on his office door after attending an Open & Affirming event in Olathe, KS.

O&A Ministry Program.

But these are just the numbers. More important are the stories of congregations that have welcomed all and the people who have found safe, affirming, life giving welcome.

You have shared with me stories of the youth groups at O&A congregations that have been inspired to set up safe spaces in their churches for fellow students who are bullied and harassed.

You have shared with me stories of congregations that have seen members grow from a lack of understanding to welcome and

affirmation.

So many of you have shared the stories of visitors who came looking for a church where all were welcome: some seeking a welcome where they've never found it before, some seeking a welcome for their transgender children, some seeking a welcoming place to raise their children.

I have heard from you about the friends in small towns who can't find welcoming church, can't find a safe loving place for their LGBT children, and the work you have

done to help find welcoming places and the support you have given the Open & Affirming Ministry Program to build more welcoming and affirming places.

I am passionate about this work because these stories save lives. In my previous life as a psychologist I heard so many stories of young people bullied, harassed, kicked out of their homes, and falling into substance abuse because there was nowhere safe to go. And I knew that these were the stories of the lucky ones, the ones who survived their suicide attempts.

Every time a church openly affirms its welcome of all, lives are changed, lives are saved.

I thank you so much for your participation in the work of transforming the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) into a place where all are welcome.

You have invited me to your Regional Assemblies and other gatherings so that I could share the resources that build community and affirmation in congregations, leading them to an Open & Affirming welcome.

***I am passionate about this work because these stories save lives.***

It has been a busy two years. I have been to 8 regional assemblies, Quadrennial, two Convocations, Pastors Conference, General Board meetings, and I have attended trainings, workshops, and ecumenical welcoming church leadership gatherings. I have been on the phone talking with pastors and regional ministers, sharing resources and suggestions that bring more welcome to our churches.

And, of course, I encourage you to continue the work with me. There are so many things you can keep doing with me:

- Let me know if there's a church you know of that could use some encouragement, resources, or advice from the Open & Affirming Ministry Program.
- Know that every church can take another step towards

welcome, not just churches ready to talk about joining GLAD's Open & Affirming Ministry Program. Learn more at <http://goo.gl/NxN3cc>

- Share the knowledge with others that GLAD has resources to build community and understanding in churches to build an open and affirming welcome. When others need more information, point them to the GLAD website ([www.gladalliance.org](http://www.gladalliance.org)) and give them my email ([mark@gladalliance.org](mailto:mark@gladalliance.org)).

And of course, you can help in other ways. To keep this work going, GLAD needs funds. Here's how you can help:

- Be a member of GLAD. Click the *Become a Member* button on GLAD's website. While there, consider a monthly or quarterly contribution.

- Encourage your friends to join GLAD, and encourage your congregation to participate in GLAD's membership challenge. Find more information on GLAD's homepage.
- Encourage your congregation to give from your Mission and Outreach budget.

Together, we can build a church where all are welcome, we can create a space where lives are saved, we can welcome our children, our neighbors, our brothers and sisters with open affirmation.

In the peace of Christ ,

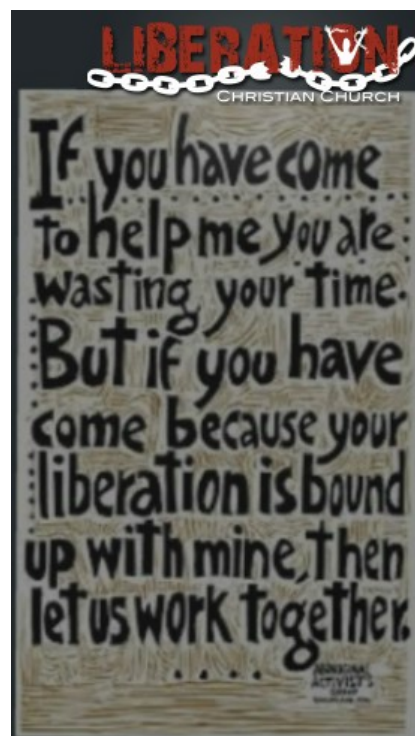


Rev. Mark C. Johnston, Ph.D.  
Executive Director  
Open & Affirming Ministry  
Program

*Liberation Christian Church in Saint Louis, MO became the first primarily African American congregation to join the Open & Affirming Ministry program in September, 2014.*

*From their Values statement:*

We affirm all people are made in the image of God. God commanded us to love ourselves so we may love our neighbor. We strive to be a diverse community celebrating differences in race, age, gender, class, and sexual orientation.



## Congregational Participation in the GLAD Membership Challenge

The GLAD Membership Challenge encourages congregations to sign up 10% of their membership as members of GLAD. Only congregations that have accepted the challenge appear on this list. For more information and to accept The Challenge, contact Mark Johnston at [mark@gladalliance.org](mailto:mark@gladalliance.org).

### ***Met The Challenge: Above and Beyond***

**Origin Fellowship, Spokane, WA** 33.3% (10 of 30)  
**Fireside Christian Church, Aurora, CO** 32% (8 of 25)  
**Edmond Trinity Christian Church, Edmond, OK** 19.5% (15 of 77)  
**First Christian Church, Charles City, IA** 13.3% (2 of 15)  
**Central Christian Church, Indianapolis, IN** 12.2% (30 of 244)

### ***Meeting The Challenge***

**Welcome Table, Seattle, WA** 9.8% (9 of 92)  
**Fringe: A Community Growing, Columbus, OH** 6.3% (1 of 16)  
**Chalice Christian Church, Gilbert, AZ** 4.4% (5 of 113)  
**Compton Heights Christian Church, St. Louis, MO** 4.4% (4 of 94)  
**First Christian Church, Vallejo, CA** 2.8% (1 of 36)  
**Midway Hills Christian Church, Dallas, TX** 2.7% (4 of 150)  
**Community Christian Church, Tempe, AZ** 2.6% (4 of 151)  
**Franklin Circle Christian Church** 2.6% (4 of 152)  
**Central Christian Church, Terre Haute, IN** 2.3% (3 of 130)  
**National City Christian Church, Washington, DC** 2.2% (11 of 494)  
**Bixby Knolls Christian Church, Long Beach, CA** 2.1% (1 of 48)  
**First Christian Church, Janesville, WI** 2.0% (2 of 99)  
**First Christian Church, Minneapolis, MN** 1.7% (3 of 177)  
**Little White Chapel Christian Church, Burbank, CA** 1.5% (1 of 65)  
**Park Avenue Christian Church, New York City, NY** 1.5% (4 of 275)  
**All Peoples Christian Church, Los Angeles, CA** 1.4% (1 of 71)  
**Douglass Boulevard Christian Church, Louisville, KY** 1.2% (2 of 170)  
**United Christian Church, Levittown, PA** 1.2% (1 of 85)  
**Church of the Foothills, Santa Ana, CA** 1% (2 of 206)  
**First Christian Church, Farmville NC** 0.6% (1 of 164)



*John's Creek Christian Church became the first Disciples Open & Affirming congregation in Georgia in March of 2015. Shortly afterwards, Pastor Rich Voelz shared:*

*"I must share quickly with you that on Easter Sunday we had many visitors who were here specifically because of our O&A decision. Out of all that happened on Easter, it was such a joy to know that people found our community to be a resurrected space where they were welcomed to the Table. And many of our people are having such meaningful, grace-filled conversations with friends and family. This decision continues to unfold in wonderful ways."*

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**For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

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- Romans 8:38,39

# 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 2014

### \$2000+

William & Mary Jacobs, Tempe AZ; Eugene Brink, Colorado Springs CO; Bob & Pam Durrwachter, Charles City IA; Wendy Baily, Boston MA; Jacquelyn Foster & David Boger, St Louis MO; Mark Covey & Israel Ehrisman, Newark NJ.

### \$1000 - \$1999

James & Patricia Barton, Mesa AZ; William Bailey, Fullerton CA; Nancy Davis, Los Angeles CA; Ben Bohren, Palm Springs CA; Mindy & Richard Hamm, Indianapolis IN; Susan McNeeley & Robert Shaw, Indianapolis IN; James & Olive Schimmel, Warren OH; Sharon Hart, Huntsville TX; Karen & Wayne Barr, Springfield VA.

### \$500 - \$999

Mark Johnston, San Francisco CA; Ann Canady, Denver CO; Jeff & Jayne Zimmerman, Deerfield IL; Wayne Sparrow, Eminence KY; Brett Terrien, Boston MA; Patricia Hurley, Cambridge MA; Randy Palmer, Jefferson City MO; Susan McDougal & Newell Williams, Fort Worth TX; Anonymous.

### \$15 - \$499

170 Other GLAD Members!

***There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.*** - Galatians 3:28

## Congregational Giving in 2014

Cherokee Christian Church, Prairie Village, KS\* \$49,005  
Hope Central Church, Jamaica Plain MA \$1,500.00  
Midway Hills Christian Church, Dallas TX \$1,000.00  
Saguaro Christian Church Tucson, AZ \$1,000.00  
National Avenue Christian Church, Springfield MO \$750.00  
Park Avenue Christian Church, New York NY \$629.00  
Hope United Church Georgetown, TX \$500.00  
United Christian Church, Levittown PA \$500.00  
Union Avenue Christian Church, St. Louis MO \$400.00  
Douglass Boulevard Christian Church, Louisville KY \$375.00  
Cairn Christian Church Lafayette, CO \$340.00  
Brentwood Christian Church Springfield, MO \$300.00  
United Disciples Fellowship, San Jose CA \$300.00  
Irving Park Christian Church Fund\*\* \$290.01  
Monte Vista Christian Church, Albuquerque NM \$250.00  
New Song Christian Church, Kansas City MO \$175.00  
Bethany Christian Church, Tulsa OK \$150.00  
Canoe Camp Church of Christ, Mansfield PA \$130.00  
Welcome Table, A Christian Community, Seattle WA \$100.00

Niles Discovery Church, Fremont CA \$100.00  
Central Christian Church, Indianapolis IN \$100.00  
Odyssey Christian Church, Jenks OK \$100.00  
Compton Heights Christian Church, St. Louis MO \$100.00  
First Christian Church Janesville WI \$50.00  
Community Christian Church, Tempe AZ \$35.00

\* Cherokee Christian Church contributed to GLAD as it closed its doors in 2014 and asked GLAD to spread the use of this contribution over 5 years.

\*\*The Irving Park Christian Church Fund at Christian Church Foundation bequests an annual contribution to GLAD.



*Brite Divinity School in Fort Worth, TX, became the first Open & Affirming Disciples Seminary in September 2013. Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, IN, followed in March 2014.*



## Our Finances

	<b>Actual 2013</b>	<b>Actual 2014</b>	<b>Budget 2015</b>
<b>Cash on hand, start of year</b>	<b>\$27,781</b>	<b>\$31,215</b>	<b>\$21,711</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Contributions	\$49,625	\$54,113	\$56,150
Sales and other income	\$7,076	\$2,224	\$4,500
Pre Assembly Event, Books, etc.			
Cherokee Christian Church gift to be used over 5 years*		\$49,005	
1st Cherokee Note			\$10,000
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$56,701</b>	<b>\$105,342</b>	<b>\$70,650</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Council Expenses	\$2,377	\$1,742	\$2,360
Leadership Retreat, etc			
General Assembly	\$7,352	\$3,585	\$3,500
Booth, Pre Assembly Event, Books, etc.			
Open & Affirming Ministry Program	\$31,335	\$65,505	\$71,250
Executive Director Compensation** and Program Expenses			
Administrative and Other Expenses	\$12,203	\$4,013	\$3,760
Web Site, Printing, Banking, Credit Card Fees, etc			
Cherokee Funds Invested with Board of Church Extension		\$40,000	
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$53,267</b>	<b>\$114,845</b>	<b>\$80,870</b>
<b>Cash on hand, end of year</b>	<b>\$31,215</b>	<b>\$21,711</b>	<b>\$11,491 (projected)</b>

### Endowment Funds and Other Cash On Hand, December 31, 2014

(All funds invested with the Board of Church Extension)

Allen Harris Fund	\$3,239
GLAD Endowment	\$3,075
Cherokee Christian Church Notes*	\$40,004

\* Invested with Board of Church Extension with maturities at intervals over 4 years.

\*\* In the years 2013 and 2014 the Executive Director was paid \$12,500 & \$22,083 less than contract.

Executive Director Compensation for 2015 is budgeted \$18,750 less than contract. Dr. Johnston has agreed to accept these amounts as fulfilling his contract.