



# galanews

THE  LETTER

Serving members and friends of  
Community of Christ

July 2018  
Volume 31 Issue 2



## *Come to Retreat!* *Building Bridges of New Understanding*

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 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.

In addition to everything that makes the GALA retreat so special, we will also be creating a new Vision/Mission/Purpose/Name for GALA and WCN as one organization. The GALA board will take the information gathered at the retreat and work with a company to help us re-brand this new organization.

### Current Purpose/Mission Statements:

**GALA (Gay and Lesbian Acceptance):** The purpose of GALA is to affirm the dignity and worth of all persons without regard to gender, race, sexual orientation, or religious affiliation. We support and encourage self actualization in an atmosphere of love, understanding, and confidentiality. We are dedicated to the celebration of diversity. We are committed to exploring the issues of spirituality and justice through dialogue, education, and action.

**WCN: Welcoming Community Network (WCN)** is an international grassroots organization that exists to enable full participation of persons of all sexual orientations and gender identities in the life and ministry of Community of Christ both in policy and practice.

### Questions to be thinking about:

- Do you envision our new purpose to be?
- How do we serve the church?
- Where could we be more effective?

You can register online at <https://www.galaweb.org/retreat.html> or fill out the registration form in this newsletter and mail to PO Box 16973, Kansas City MO 64133.

# GALA

## Executive Board

**Jerry M. Dale Jr. - President**

jerry@galaweb.org

**President-Elect**

(Vacant)

**Parker Johnson—Vice-President**

parker@galaweb.org

**Chaplain**

(Vacant)

**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](http://www.galaweb.org)**

# President's Message

## TWO ORGANIZATIONS WITH A SHARED MISSION

For the last 11 years Community of Christ has been blessed to have 2 organizations supporting full inclusion of LGBTQ+ individuals in the life and ministry of the church. GALA has been supporting individuals that identify as LGBTQ+ for over 30 years and Welcoming Community Network (WCN) developed a process with 11 other denominations to encourage congregations to publicly declare that they are Welcoming and Affirming to LGBTQ+ people. WCN grew out of the mission of GALA in 2007 and has been operating as a separate non-profit with their own bylaws and board of directors.

It is important to note that without the work of GALA and WCN the church might not have had the courage to move toward inclusion. As more and more nations hold National Conferences and request a change in policy regarding marriage of same gender couples and ordination of members in same gender relationships, it makes sense to combine our efforts.

Over the last year the GALA Board of Directors and the WCN Board of Directors have been in conversations about a potential merger of the 2 organizations. A merge committee was formed with members from both GALA and WCN with the task of drafting a proposal of a merged organization. I am excited to say that on June 20th the GALA Board of Directors accepted the proposal and on July 12th the WCN Board of Directors accepted the proposal.

Next, it is up to you, the members, to give input. A series of conference calls is scheduled to share the plan and revised bylaws of the organization. Conference calls are scheduled for the following dates:

- Thursday, July 19th 9pm eastern, 8pm central, 7pm mountain and 6pm pacific.
- Sunday, July 29th 8pm eastern, 7pm central, 6pm mountain and 5pm pacific.
- Saturday, August 4th 4pm eastern, 3pm central, 2pm mountain and 1pm pacific.

We will be using Zoom video conferencing with desktop sharing. Check the GALA and WCN webpages for call-in details. A recorded presentation will be made available on both the GALA and WCN

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websites.

We are grateful to the merge committee: Jerry M. Dale, Jr. (GALA president and WCN board member), John Billings (GALA treasurer and WCN president), Sam Marmoy (founding board member of WCN and GALA member) and Meredith Bischoff (WCN board member)

—Jerry M. Dale, Jr., President



## NEXT STEPS IN THE MERGE PROCESS

After the series of informational conference calls in July and August a vote will be taken on the bylaws and the election of new board of directors members for the restructured organization. The following people will be eligible to vote: GALA members who have paid dues by August 5th, WCN Board members who are not GALA members and Congregations that have completed the WCN process by August 5th will identify a member to represent their congregation and will get 1 vote.

During the 2018 GALA retreat business meeting the results of the vote and election will be announced. The GALA retreat planning committee has been working to design a retreat that will help us brainstorm ideas for a new Mission, Vision and Name for a joined organization. For those that are not able to join us at the retreat, we will schedule additional sessions after the retreat for your input.

The Board of Directors will work with an external marketing consultant to take the brainstorming and come up with a rebranded organization. The new organization will be announced at World Conference 2019.

(continued from page 2 ) The final step of this process will be for WCN to vote to disband their organization.

—Jerry M. Dale, Jr., President



## CHANGES TO THE BYLAWS

In every non-profit organization there are two documents that are required by law: Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. As a tax exempt organization (501c3) registered in the state of Missouri we must also meet additional Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regulatory obligations. All of these changes are currently being reviewed by a lawyer to ensure we are in compliance with applicable law.

These Bylaw changes reflect a merged organization. The process was to take portions of both the GALA and WCN Bylaws and bring them up to current standards. Below is a section by section look at the changes.

**Article II:** The purpose in the bylaws has been expanded to include both the purpose of GALA and WCN. We see these as the guiding principles of why we do what we do.

**Article III:** The membership section includes Individual, Family, Congregational and voice-no-vote types of memberships.

**Article IV:** The quorum has expanded from 10% to 20%. This is to allow for a more representative group to make decisions for the organization.

**Article V:** This section on Board of Directors has the most significant changes from the current GALA Bylaws.

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**Section 3** streamlines the election process and moves much of the policy and procedures to a new policy and procedure to be developed.

**Section 4** : Qualifications, Number, Tenure and Requirements. This section is a hybrid of new and revised information.

**Qualifications:** In order to protect Board of Director members from any impropriety a requirement that no two members can be related by blood or marriage/partnership has been included.

**Number:** The size of the board has grown from 9 members to 11 members.

A 4 month transition period has been added for any newly elected Board of Director members. The transition period is from September through December as a voice no vote member. The term begins January 1st.

**Tenure:** From 3 consecutive terms or 9 years, to 2 consecutive terms or 6 years.

**Section 12 - Vacancies** - removed the requirement for a special election for vacancies and allowed those positions to be appointed by the Board of Directors for the remainder of the term.

## EXISTING GALA BOARD    NEW CONFIGURATION

President	President
Vice President	Vice President
Secretary	Secretary
Treasurer	Treasurer
Three (3) At Large Positions	Four (4) At Large Positions
Chaplain (voting member)	Chaplain (Voice but no vote)
<i>NEW</i>	Member Support Coordinator
<i>NEW</i>	Congregation Support Coordinator
Under Secretary of Publications	Removed
Elect/Past President	Removed
Elect/Past Treasurer	Removed

## Article VI Board of Director Roles

This section clearly outlines the roles of each of the positions of the Board of Directors.

## Article VII Committees

Established the following standing committees: Executive Committee, Finance Committee and Nomination Committee. Allows the Board of Directors to create additional committees as needed.

## Article VIII Indemnification

Expanded this section to protect the Board of Directors from any legal harm.

If you have any questions about these changes, please join one of the conference calls, or e-mail us at [info@galaweb.org](mailto:info@galaweb.org).



Are you interested in serving on the board as treasurer or secretary or in an at-large position? Please send your name and a short bio to [ginger@galaweb.org](mailto:ginger@galaweb.org)

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## GREETINGS FROM PARKER JOHNSON

It's an exciting time here at GALA HQ. (HQ, in this case, is a trendy little coffee shop in downtown Calgary right along the river. It's the perfect setting to draft my newsletter update for all of you!)

The Board has been busily working to make improvements to administrative functions and processes and, in doing so, is investing in the future success of the organization. In June 2018, we launched a refreshed website that will be the central hub of information for GALA. News, resources, contact information, forms, documents...everything you can think of will be housed here as they become available. In 2018, it is more important than ever that our online footprint not only has curb appeal, but also that it is filled with high-quality content and resources. In addition, our social media strategy is set to receive a makeover in the near future. Stay tuned for this!

Earlier this year the Board held a retreat at the Temple (Community of Christ Headquarters) in Independence, MO, USA. There, we experienced community together through song, arts & crafts, discussion, and more. But the retreat was much more than just an attempt at community building. We spent countless hours strategizing our mission, our priorities, and our history. With this experience behind us, we've been able to move ahead as a much more consistent pace knowing that we are all on the same page and committed to the same journey.

On a more personal note, I'm not sure about you, but over the past few months, I've especially felt the tug to speak out as a peacemaker, to build inclusive communities, and to fiercely defend the worth of all. Don't get me wrong, I tend to flood my representatives' inboxes with emails and voicemails,

but lately I have felt more hopeless than ever, questioning exactly what it is I can do to make any sort of change. The political climate in which we live and work is filled with a barrage of opinions, confusing rhetoric, and immoral policies, and at times, it is difficult to decide exactly where we should put our time, resources, and energy. It can seem overwhelming (a nice way of putting it), and it can begin to impact our mood, our mental health, our physical wellbeing, and even our relationships. For many of us on the margins, the need to belong can simultaneously create a scenario of internal conflict that only worsens the concerns I just described.

***What happens when the political arguments are about us?***

***What happens when we are no longer physically separated from the issues being debated?***

***What happens when those we love, the ones who raised us and the ones we trust, diminish our worth?***

***What happens when the very religious circles in which we find refuge are no longer safe?***

I find myself living in a constant state of distrust and skepticism. I've said, "I just don't understand," more lately than I ever have in my entire life. But it's in communities like GALA that I find my refuge, because I know we are working hard to promote acceptable policies throughout Community of Christ and welcome, affirmation, reconciliation, and safe harbor for those who so desperately need it most.

I am inspired, encouraged, and supported by this community, and in turn, I hope to inspire, encourage, and support this community. Now, more than ever,  
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the church needs to hear our stories. We have made major gains in many areas of inclusivity across Community of Christ, but we are no where near where we need to be.

One area we desperately must commit more time and resources to is self-care. In some countries, our faith tradition has voted to become an affirming denomination...one in which all are invited to “fully” participate and all are seen as having inestimable worth.

## But is that how you see yourself? Are you okay?

As your Vice President (and a white, American, cisgender gay male member of Community of Christ), I am going to be completely transparent with you: **I am not okay.** Worthiness does not simply replace self-hate after a lifetime of anti-LGBTQ+ policies had a chance to seep into my identity. This is an area I certainly need to do a lot of work, but I recognize that this pain also fuels my need for a more inclusive Community of Christ...which is why I am here. (Please feel free to connect with me directly if you are also struggling in this area. [parker@galaweb.org](mailto:parker@galaweb.org))

What we do here is incredibly important, and I don't take that lightly.

If you are already an active member, we are grateful for your commitment to this important work! If you haven't yet joined, please consider adding your voice to the chorus...

**If you are currently in need of support, love, and shelter...**we want to hear your stories, your struggles, your joys...we are committed to your wellbeing.

**If you are currently feeling strength, confidence, and**

**safety...**we wrap our arms around your neck and invite you to extend that mantle of refuge to others through one of our many volunteer opportunities.

**If you are currently an emboldened ally...**we gratefully welcome your journey into the margins and honor it by providing you with the resources needed to go out and effectuate positive change.

—Parker Johnson, Vice President



## CONFERENCE CALLS

A series of conference calls is scheduled to share the plan and revised bylaws of the organization. Please mark your calendar and join one of the conference calls scheduled for the following dates:

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- Sunday, July 29th 8pm eastern, 7pm central, 6pm mountain and 5pm pacific.
- Saturday, August 4th 4pm eastern, 3pm central, 2pm mountain and 1pm pacific.



## 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](mailto:brittanymangelson@gmail.com)



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## PORTSMOUTH PRIDE

### NEW ADDRESS

GALA has a **new post office box address**. The old address in Lapeer, Michigan, is no longer valid.

GALA  
PO Box 16973  
Kansas City MO 64133



### NEW WEBSITE

The GALA Board of Directors is proud to unveil a major component of its 2018 strategy: **our new website**. Ours is an organization that is supported by grass-roots efforts around the world, and the Board and membership alike have long recognized a need for a new, modernized website that would better meet the needs of GALA into the future. The URL remains the same: **[www.galaweb.org](http://www.galaweb.org)**. Please share this new online tool far and wide and encourage friends and family to become members!



### 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 <https://www.galaweb.org/membership.html>.

- There are several membership levels :
- Individual—\$25
- Household—\$40
- Limited income/student—\$10

On June 30, 2018, the Portsmouth Welcoming Community, a Community of Christ congregation, hosted the Portsmouth Pride Festival, the first of its kind in the area and surrounding region. Justin DeLong spearheaded the festival with a stated goal of taking a public stance and letting the community know that there is a church in their community that will fully welcome, embrace and include those in the LGBTQIA+ community.

What was planned to be a small gathering of 20-30 people ended up being a large event with over 500 people in attendance. Several organizations attended to set up booths and speakers traveled from hours away to speak!

Read more about the event at <https://www.galaweb.org/news>.



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## 2018 GALA RETREAT REGISTRATION

August 31-September 3, 2018  
Camp Red Cliffe  
12566 Highway 39  
Huntsville UT 84317

**\*Cost: \$60 per person / \$130 family maximum (if registered and paid by July 31)**

***With prorated 2018 membership:***

***Individual \$70; Family \$150***

**\$75 per person / \$180 family maximum (August 1 and after)**

***With prorated 2018 membership:***

***Individual \$85; Family \$200***

Children five years of age and under at no additional charge.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional family members: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

First GALA retreat? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Special dietary needs: \_\_\_\_\_

Medical/special needs: \_\_\_\_\_

Roommate preference \_\_\_\_\_

I need an accessible cabin :  yes  no      I need a lower bunk only:  yes  no

I will need transportation  To / from Salt Lake City Airport

To / from Ogden Airport

Please provide flight number, arrival time, and departure time:

I give permission to have my picture (and any additional family members) taken and used in post-retreat stories.  yes  no

I give my permission to have my contact information shared with those at the retreat.  
yes  no

Please send this form with a check to GALA, PO Box 16973, Kansas City MO 64133.

\*Scholarships are available for registration costs. Submit a request to [info@galaweb.org](mailto:info@galaweb.org)







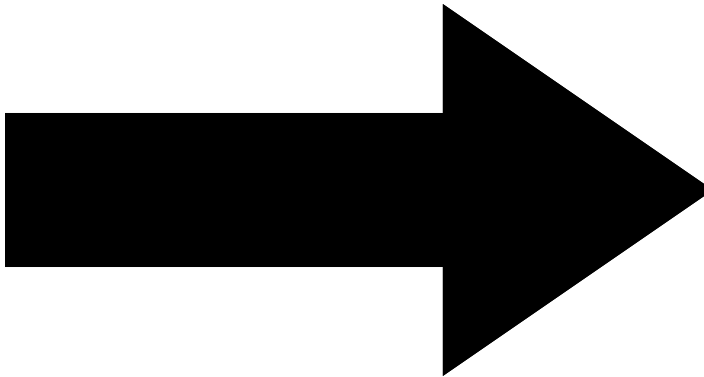
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P.O. Box 16973  
Kansas City MO 64133

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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**

