



# crossbeams

A publication of the Gay, Lesbian, and Affirming Disciples Alliance, Inc.

Issue #61 September 2005

[www.gladalliance.org](http://www.gladalliance.org)

## Breathing Life: Empowering faith communities to breathe life into dry bones

Plans are well underway for the Open & Affirming Ministry Team's training event "Breathing Life."

This three-day event will "breathe life" into the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) by *uniting*, *empowering*, and *creating* congregations that are committed to the transformative power of faith that embraces and affirms all persons.

### Uniting

- Strengthening the bonds of community among existing Open & Affirming congregations
- Establishing a true sense of solidarity of mission among Open & Affirming congregations

### Empowering

- Equipping individuals with the theological grounding, study tools, and inspiration needed to be effective leaders able to frame the importance of the Open & Affirming movement
- Training these leaders to assist others in their discernment concerning Open & Affirming issues
- Nurturing prospective Open & Affirming congregations
- Encouraging Open & Affirming congregations to offer a stronger prophetic voice concerning Open & Affirming issues in the midst of a denomination seeking to respond to God's mission and vision

### Creating

- Promoting networks of Open & Affirming congregations to communicate the Open & Affirming vision at the congregational and regional levels
- Establishing intentional space for new growth and possibilities to emerge within the context of Open & Affirming communities of faith
- Transforming ourselves into Open & Affirming "living resources" for communities and regions

The \$50 registration fee includes event training materials and meals. Discount housing has been reserved at Texas Station Gambling Hall & Hotel.

The event at First Christian Church in Las Vegas

begins Thursday, February 9 at noon and runs to 1pm on Saturday February 11.

Featured presenters are:

- **Emily Eastwood** is the Executive Director of the Lutherans Concerned/North America (LC/NA) and Director of the Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Program of LC/NA.
- **Mary A. Tolbert** is Professor of Biblical Studies at the Pacific School of Religion and the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, CA the Center for Lesbian and Executive Director of the Gay Studies in Religion and Ministry at the Pacific School of Religion. Mary's work is focused on feminism, biblical interpretation and social location, and, most recently, queer theory and gender construction.
- **Ronald Parker** is the Executive Regional Minister of the Central Rocky Mountain Region. He is also on the Board of Directors of Tennyson Center for Children at Colorado Christian Home.

For more information see [www.gladalliance.org](http://www.gladalliance.org) or e-mail [breathinglife@gladalliance.org](mailto:breathinglife@gladalliance.org).

---

## Open & Affirming Ministry Team honors 9 new O&A Ministries at General Assembly

The Open & Affirming Ministry Team honored these 9 new O&A Ministries at General Assembly. This brings the total count of O&A Ministries to 68.

- **Cherokee Christian Church**  
Prairie Village, KS
- **First Christian Church** Orange, CA
- **First Christian Church** Las Cruces, NM
- **New Covenant Community Church**  
Normal, IL
- **Forest Hill Christian Church**  
San Francisco, CA
- **Winterville Christian Church** Winterville, NC
- **University Christian Ministries**  
Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL
- **First Christian Church** Lehigh Acres, FL
- **Community of Grace Christian Church**  
South Minneapolis, MN

---

## **Discernment Team Staffs Booth for the Office of the General Minister and President**

"This is the discernment material that was presented at the Kansas City GA in 2001."

Karen Barr, team leader for the Discernment Ministry Team, tells us that she repeated this sentence at least 200 times during the GA in Portland. Although almost everyone who stopped by the booth knew that a steering committee had been appointed

and material presented, very few had ever actually picked up the book and looked at it before.

Assembly goers in Portland had the chance to do see the materials at the booth sponsored by the OGMP and planned and staffed by GLAD.

This isn't the first time that Karen has done the same. Last year she staffed a similar display at Session 2004, the CMF gathering held in Kentucky.

And Karen tells us that progress is sometimes visible. She recognized one of the people that stopped to talk at the General

Assembly booth as someone she had talked to at Sessions. In fact, the memory of the Kentucky discussion stuck with her because in KY he had one of the most negative reactions she had ever received.

However, at this year's General Assembly he stopped, picked up the material and discussed how one might use it.

The team is already working on an exhibit at Mix in 06, the Disciples Women's Quadrennial will for the first time meet together with the United Church of Christ's National Women's Meeting.

## **GLAD Alliance Inc PO Box 44400 Indianapolis IN 46244-0400**

FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED



[crossbeams@gladalliance.org](mailto:crossbeams@gladalliance.org)

---

## **John Thomas, General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ, Addresses GLAD Banquet**

"God's Extravagant Welcome Extending Citizenship" was the title of Rev. Thomas' address to the GLAD Banquet in Portland.

He spoke of the United Church's God Is Still Speaking campaign, including a TV ad that portrayed a church with bouncers outside the door deciding who can enter

and who can't, to contrast with the statement "Jesus didn't turn people away; neither do we. No matter who you are, no matter where you are on life's journey, you're welcome here. The United Church of Christ."

Rev. Thomas said that thanks is due to ABC and CBS for the free air time given the campaign when the major networks deemed the ad "too controversial" to be aired.

He also spoke of the ever widening circle of citizenship in this country, finally including

African Americans and women as full members of society. John compared this ever widening circle to how the Gentiles were included in the Jewish covenant, reminding us that from its beginning the Church has struggled to expand its welcome.

Rev. Thomas spoke of the UCC's historic vote to affirm same gender marriage, yet another move forward to realizing God's extravagant welcome.

You can read the full text of Rev. Thomas' address at [news.gladalliance.org](http://news.gladalliance.org).