



crossbeams

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Changes in Regional Policies: A Letter from the Central Rocky Mountain Region

Dear Friends,

Things are changing in the Central Rocky Mountain Region (CRMR) of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and I wanted to tell you about it.

In 1990, resolution 9004 was passed at our Regional Assembly, denying standing to gay men and lesbians, either as ordained clergy or as Licensed Professional ministers (formerly known as licensed lay ministers.) One clergy woman, Rev. Cheryl Breiner, was stripped of her standing in the early 90's when she came out to the Committee on the Order of the Ministry, which deals with issues of standing.

Recently, the bylaws of the region have been rewritten and that language has been removed. Rev. Cheryl Breiner was given her standing back. You can read about her story in the January Disciples World. My personal joy is that I have been the first openly lesbian candidate to go before that committee since that change. While the LPM process is typically a two year process of education and mentoring, the committee looked at my education and ministry over the past 18 years and waived the requirement, granting me my standing immediately.

It was a bittersweet moment, sweet in becoming recognized by and accountable to the region, but bitter in realizing that it was a recognition denied to me for 18 years. I was left wondering how many of my brothers and sisters left the region after resolution 9004 was passed or more likely, how many of them gave up on their dream of ministry and found other careers.

Before I close, I want to recognize and celebrate the contributions of our last regional minister, Dr. Ron Parker, in making these changes possible while holding the region together! His work on behalf of social justice in this region was impressive and constant.

Blessings and Celebrations from Colorado!

Sherrill M. Morris
Fireside Christian Church

Save the Date!

The 2008 GLAD Event has been scheduled for August 15-17 at the Pilgrim Pines Camp and Conference Center in California.

Upcoming Events

National Black Religious Summit 12 on Sexuality

July 9-11, 2008 at the Howard University School of Divinity, Washington, DC.

This event includes sessions on domestic violence, homosexuality and the Black church, advocating for comprehensive sex education, the gifts of women in the pulpit, sexuality and the ministry, "Safe Church" practices for children, and more.

Many Stories... One Voice: Equipping the Saints for the Ministry of God's Extravagant Welcome

September 3-7, 2008, New Orleans Marriott, New Orleans, LA.

A leadership development event sponsored by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Institute for Welcoming Resources, seeking transformation of individual lives, of our pro-lgbt movement and of our culture by equipping the saints for the ministry of God's extravagant welcome.

Towards a Welcoming and Inclusive Church

June 6 to 8, 2008 LaVerne, California.

This training, designed for congregations and their leaders, will explore topics which will help you to become a more effective leader in working with congregations on issues related to human sexuality and gender identity for the purpose of helping a congregation discern God's call to become more welcoming and inclusive, particularly of lgbt persons.

Find links at: news.gladalliance.org

Crossbeams on the Web

Send your e-mail address to crossbeams@gladalliance.org and we'll let you know when Crossbeams is available on the web.

Open & Affirming: An Ongoing Journey at Findlay Street Christian Church

by Joan Dennehy, Pastor,
Findlay Street Christian Church

[ed note: the entire text of the article excerpted below can be found at news.gladalliance.org]

Twenty-one years ago Findlay Street Christian Church in Seattle, WA., became the first Open & Affirming congregation in our denomination. That was the heritage that drew me to her

sixteen years ago, and we've been walking together ever since. It was and is a church that celebrates diversity and invites full participation and leadership from all who gather there. Over half its members are GLBT, including myself, yet it's always been a church with a special interest rather than a single focus. Therefore O&A was a way of being in the world that would consistently challenge us.

In the fall of 1999 we woke up to the challenge and gift of a new century to come. We began with a congregational survey. We

confessed that we had not been good stewards of our large property, now in hopeless disrepair.

Also, as the Disciples were getting serious about becoming an anti-racist, pro-reconciling church we got serious about it on a local level. A Race Relations group formed that continues to this day, leading us each year in a full month's celebration of Black History Month.

As we got better at telling the truth, other diversity emerged. There were different theological views and language, more

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questions than answers, yet it did not stop us from sitting forward on the edge of the pews drinking in people's stories, celebrating the ways God was active in their lives. There were differently-abled people joining the community, we looked at the children in a new way—we are certainly a mixed bag of humanity. However, it dawned on us how very hard it is to be a Christian. Following the way of Jesus takes you to some strange places.

We seem to be morphing into an intentional community where it is

safe for diversity to exist and thrive, making room for any who want to practice being God's new world with us, messy as that is.

So it was three years ago that with daring and trembling we agreed to sell our property without any clear idea of where we were going and what the future might hold. We left Findlay Street after a centennial bash, broad and impish grins on faces that have not looked back.

We have been in interim space for the past 18 months, sharing a stately, progressive gracious Presbyterian church. Our current

passion is to build a mixed-use facility (God only knows how) in an urban village along the new light rail stops in Seattle, a combination of sanctuary and housing, a contemplative place in the density of commerce, a sacred place for the community to use for the moments in life that really matter and for the visual and musical arts.

Being O&A is stretching us now in two directions: being green and being Christian in an interfaith world. When O&A gets into your bones you wonder if you can ever be anywhere but on that edge.