

Drops of Water



Published Daily During GC 2004 by Affirmation: United Methodists
for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Concerns

April 30, 2004 GC 2004 Issue #3

Where's Affirmation?

- Daily Newsletter
- Love Makes a Family Photo Exhibit at meet-here.com space daily
- Open Arts Open House Reception, 5-10 p.m. tonight (Friday, April 30) cosponsored along with Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference Reconciling Ministries, Reconciling Ministries Network, Thomas Merton Center and Shepherd Wellness Community
- General Membership/ Corporate Meeting, 2 p.m. Saturday, May 1, at Smithfield United Church
- Lunchtime Video Discussions at Smithfield United Church - daily

Besides the above activities and events, Affirmation has been integral in the planning and coordination of a Common Witness space and many activities.

Jim Palmquist serves as one of two liaisons with Smithfield Church and coordinated many logistics. Jim hung the Love Makes a Family Exhibit.

Kathryn Mitchem staffs the meet-here.com space from 6:30 a.m. to 12 noon weekdays.

Peggy Gaylord coordinated the presence of the Love Makes a Family Photo Exhibit, and has participated in much of the partnership work.

Diane DeLap is facilitating the Lunchtime Video discussions and doing flyer desktop publishing.

Gary Shephard has worked behind the scenes on much of our presence at GC 2004 and is co-editing the Newsletter.

Judy WestLee is co-editing the Newsletter

Ken Rowe is working on Hot Water Topics.

Both **Peggy** and **Ken** as

Continued on Page 3

Open Arts Open House Offered to Open Minds

You are invited to celebrate an evening of diverse LGBT performance that is open and welcoming to all sexual orientations, religious affiliations and lifestyles this evening. Plus you will have an opportunity to visit the Andy Warhol Museum!

This special, multi-faceted

Continued on Page 3

Drops of Water

Drops of Water is published each day the conference is in session during General Conference 2004 by **Affirmation: United Methodists for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Concerns**, PO Box 1021, Evanston, IL 60204.

© 2004 Affirmation: United Methodists for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, & Transgender Concerns

Only Affirmation's spokespersons, Peggy Gaylord and Ken Ian Rowe, may represent the official positions of the organizations. All articles in *Drops of Water* reflect the opinions of the individual authors and are not necessarily the official position of Affirmation: United Methodist.

Coeditors: Judy WestLee & Gary Shephard

Drops of Water is sponsored by the Red Lion Hotel in Bakersfield, CA.

Affirmation's Mission Statement

Affirmation: United Methodist is an activist caucus of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, our families, and friends, organized to speak for ourselves. Together we:

- * Proclaim a gospel of respect, love, and justice;
- * Relentlessly pursue policies and processes that support full participation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people in all areas and levels of The United Methodist Church;
- * Overcome the barriers that diminish our common humanity by excluding or judging people because of their race, gender, class, or physical abilities;
- * Empower people to undertake works of inclusion and justice where they are.

Affirmation to Host Bisexuality Talks During Common Witness Lunch

God and sex. Religion and freedom of choice. In the video *Bi-sex'u-al*, three UCC members explain how they reconcile their bisexual orientation to their faith, and demonstrate how they are reaching out to others to encourage self-acceptance. Their courage is inspiring. Their openness is refreshing. Their stories will capture your heart. This video will not answer all questions about bisexuality. It is an introduction to three individuals and their stories.

Diane DeLap, an Affirmation Council member, will host the lunch time discussion on bisexuality from 12:45 to 1:45 p.m.

The 30-minute video, *bi-sex'u-al*, is available through UCC Resources (800-537-3394). It comes with a study / leader's guide for discussion.

Service of Hope Gathers Divergent Worship Views

Let's review: we all believe in God; we all accept Christ Jesus as Savior; we do not agree on whether or not homosexuality is sinful or acceptable to the church. Hmm, it seems it's time to gather for prayer and worship. Which people of various views will do at 3:30 p.m. Sunday, May 2, at First United Methodist Church, 5401 Center Ave., Pittsburgh.

Those attending will not be asked to endorse any particular position. Instead,

we will gather for worship, prayer and communion, asking that God will lead us to treat one another with respect in the midst of our challenging disagreements.

Organizers explain their goal is to encourage prayer, reflection and dialogue across the entire United Methodist Church as we address these difficult issues. As we struggle together with our disagreements, can we do so in a manner that honors

Continued on Page 3

Where's Affirmation...

Continued from Page 1

spokespeople have been networking and articulating the vision of Affirmation to the church.

Affirmation volunteers have also been plugged into the Common Witness volunteer pool.

As a volunteer organization, Affirmation couldn't exist or be a presence at GC without help from people like you. Thanks to all who make it possible to witness to an inclusive church. We are here. It's not debatable.

Open Arts Open House for Open Minds...

Continued from Page 1

event will feature the outrageous New York drag cabaret artists, the Dueling Bankheads, and local lesbian and gay performance groups, the Renaissance City Choir and the Renaissance Wimmin's Drumming Circle. The Evening Factory, featuring hands-on art-making projects in the spirit of Andy Warhol and centered on the theme of gay marriage, will be open throughout the evening. All exhibits will be open for viewing as well.

Open Arts Open House will be from 5 – 10 p.m. tonight at the Andy Warhol Museum, 117 Sandusky St., Pittsburgh. Admission is \$5 at the door and an additional but optional \$5 to see the Dueling Bankheads.

The Western Pennsylvania

Reconciling Ministries, Affirmation and the Reconciling Ministries Network sponsor this event.

SoulForce Info

Anyone interested in contacting SoulForce to volunteer in their efforts here at GC is invited to call Marylee Fithian at 707-953-2353. Marylee is one of the United Methodist SoulForce coordinators.

SoulForce Responds to Good News

Steven Webster, one of the UM SoulForce coordinators, has written a response to a Good News newsletter article. It's available on the SoulForce web site, www.soulforce.org. The link for the response is on the right side of the page. The response contains a link to the original Good News article.

Service of Hope....

Continued from Page 2

Christ?, ask the organizers. With a tone of humility and with prayers for wisdom, this service will focus on Jesus Christ. Each participant will be asked to search his/her own heart and beliefs for authentic ways to reach out in love and ministry to all people. In addition, we will be challenged to work toward unity with integrity for those on all sides of this discussion.

Bishop George Bashore and Bishop Richard Wilke will speak. Bishop William Morris and Bishop Mary Ann Swenson will lead liturgy and communion.

For transportation to First UMC Pittsburgh, the 86A bus will stop at the Convention Center at approximately 2:08, 2:38 and 3:08 p.m. Sunday and stop in front of First UMC Pittsburgh. Call the PAT office at 412-442-2000 to get specific routes and schedules from other locations.

The First UMC, Pittsburgh web site includes driving directions: www.FirstUMCPittsburgh.org.

All Are Invited!

Membership/Annual Meeting

You don't have to be a member of Affirmation to come to our membership and annual corporate meeting Saturday. If you don't know much about Affirmation, this is a good chance to get a peek at the organization.

need to be self starters able to carry though with assignments between council meetings and who can keep up with the council e-mail conversations. Experience with consensus model decision making is helpful, but not required.

We'll be receiving the report of our Strategic Visioning task force. That plan will shape the actions of the organization for the next several years. We'll take some time to sing. There'll be a question and answer time for anyone wanting to know more about Affirmation.

When: Saturday, May 1 at 2 p.m. (1:30 p.m. sign-in and reception)
Where: Smithfield United Church, 620 Smithfield St., Pittsburgh, PA 15222, in the Common Witness space in the basement.

Love Makes a Family Photo Exhibit

Part of the meeting will be the required annual corporate meeting where we'll be electing new directors to the board of the corporation. Voting will be limited to current members, so if you want to vote in the election, be sure to come early so your membership can be verified. You'll be able to renew your membership or join during the 1:30 to 2 p.m. pre-meeting credentialing time.

Love Makes a Family is an exhibit of photo-graphs and interviews with families that have lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender members. Be sure to see it during GC. Love Makes a Family is being shown in the meet-here.com space at 945 Liberty Ave. The display was arranged the Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference Reconciling Ministries and Affirmation.

Nominations for the board will be accepted from the floor of the meeting. Candidates for election need to be current members of Affirmation, able to attend three meetings a year of four days each. Candidates

Daily Events at GC
Hospitality Room at Smithfield United is open 6 a.m. - 11 p.m. weekdays through Thursday, May 6.
Weekday Breakfast and Legislative Briefing For Delegates (Volunteers and Visitors welcome) 7 – 8 a.m. Smithfield United.
Weekday Common Witness Delicious and Affordable Lunches for delegates, volunteers and visitors at Smithfield Church, 620 Smithfield St., between 12 noon and 1:30 p.m.

Upcoming Events
Friday Apr 30 – Western Pennsylvania RUMs Delegate Reception - 5 – 10 p.m. at the Andy Warhol Museum, 117 Sandusky St.
Sat May 1 – Reconciling Parents Network (PRN) Breakfast - 8:30 a.m. at Smithfield United. Featuring Bishop Fritz & Etta Mutti.
Sat May 1 – Affirmation Annual Corporate Meeting 1:30 p.m. – Credentialing for voting. Meeting begins at 2 p.m. Smithfield United, 620 Smithfield St.
Sat May 1 – “Yes, They’re Family” Reunion 1 to 3 p.m. at Calvary UMC, 971 Beech Ave. Food, Fellowship, stories, speakers, music. Find old friends, make new family.
Sat May 1 – MFSA Presents the Ball Award 8 p.m. at First UMC Pittsburgh, information and tickets available in the hospitality room at Smithfield United. Tickets are also available at the meet-here.com space at 945 Liberty Ave.
Sun May 2 – Come to the Water Worship – 2 p.m. – RMN worship service at East Liberty Presbyterian Church.
Sun May 2 – Service of Hope – 3:30 PM – First UMC Pittsburgh, 5401 Centre Ave., Pittsburgh. A chance for us to come together to grieve over the deep brokenness within the body of Christ over the topic of sexual orientation.