



The Association of Welcoming & Affirming Baptists

# Associational

An Ongoing eNewsletter from the Executive Director

Issue 39 ~ January 2008

## From the Executive Director

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

These are exciting days for AWAB! We have launched a capacity-building project with the generous support of the Arcus Foundation (Arcus Gay & Lesbian Fund - [www.arcusfoundation.org](http://www.arcusfoundation.org)).

We're now receiving applications for a half-time Project Coordinator who will help us establish institutional capacity and integrity in four main areas:

- ❖ Board Development
- ❖ Fund Development
- ❖ Media Development &
- ❖ Networking Development (bringing all kinds of Baptists together to work for LGBT inclusion in as many ways as possible).

We're stepping up to the plate, saying "AWAB wants to become a significant player in effecting societal change for LGBT equality and inclusion!"

Receiving grant money from the Arcus Foundation is fantastic! But we must all understand that sustainability of this organization is OUR responsibility! We must ALL step up to the plate and share our resources to create an infrastructure from which a myriad of new ministries will emerge.

I urge you to visit [www.wabaptists.org](http://www.wabaptists.org) and sign up for the Judson Society, and give \$5, \$15, \$50, \$150 through this monthly subscription program. Our goal is to provide AWAB with a consistent monthly stream of income.

Together we will live into our identity as "The National Voice for LGBT Baptists!"

A Happy New Year to you!

Lovingly,  
Ken Pennings  
608-255-2155  
[ken@wabaptists.org](mailto:ken@wabaptists.org)

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## "GOSPEL OF INCLUSION" TRAINING

February 15-18, 2008  
Minneapolis. MN

Along with its ecumenical partners, The Association of Welcoming & Affirming Baptists has hired Rev. Dr. Anita Bradshaw to train our constituents to become ambassadors of the Gospel of Inclusion right where we live! Our hope is that we will take

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### About Associational

Associational is published monthly by the Association of Welcoming & Affirming Baptists, an organization of churches, groups and individuals that advocate for the full inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons with Baptist churches.

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what we've learned at the training in Minneapolis, return to our home towns, and begin to work in teams to increase the number of Welcoming & Affirming Congregations in our own areas. Please register for the first training of our National Field Organizing Project at **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid..** Cost: \$85. Contact Anita L. Bradshaw for more information: **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.,** 612-791-821.

"Towards a Welcoming and Inclusive Church" is a training resource, supported by a grant given by the Arcus Foundation to a coalition of the Affirming Disciples Alliance Inc. (GLAD - Christian Church: Disciples of Christ); Association of Welcoming & Affirming Baptists (AWAB - American Baptist Churches USA, Alliance of Baptists, & Cooperative Baptist Fellowship); Brethren Mennonite Council for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Interests (BMC); and Welcoming Community Network (WCN - Community of Christ). However, anyone from another denomination is welcome.

Anyone interested in seeing the Church (meaning all churches) become more welcoming, supportive and inclusive of lgbt persons. Included are lay leaders, ordained leaders, denominational or judicatory leaders, members who care about these issues, and/or leaders and members in denominational lgbt groups should attend this training. This training will be very helpful to you in honing your skills and gaining more knowledge about how to help congregations through those tough conversations toward a more fully inclusive church.

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

Included in the training are faith-based community organizing techniques; congregational conflict theory and resolution; managing change in congregations; effective strategies for helping congregations discern the call to be welcoming; building relationships for change; dealing with difficult conversations around biblical material, stereotypes, "bisexual" and "transgender" questions, and other areas of concern; opportunity to build relationships with others who share your concerns; personal spiritual enrichment; opportunity for growth and challenge; intense few days of hard work, laughter, and fun, and good food.

#### Training Schedule:

February 15: 4:00 p.m. Registration Begins, 5:00 p.m. Dinner, 9:15 p.m. End for the Day

February 16 & 17: 8:30 a.m. to 8:15 p.m.

February 18: 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The registration fee of \$85.00 includes training, materials, meals and snack breaks. Registration deadline is February 8, 2008. Cancellation fee is \$25.00. No refunds for cancellations will be given after February 8, 2008.

Lodging will be provided at the Quality Inn and Suites Bloomington, Minnesota. The hotel is located at 814 East American Boulevard, Bloomington, MN, 952-854-5558. Rooms are \$79.00, plus tax, for one to four persons. Room rates are not guaranteed after January 15, 2008. Every effort will be made to assist in matching roommates, but we cannot guarantee to provide you with a roommate(s). The hotel offers free shuttle service to/from the airport, as well as a deluxe continental breakfast, free high speed internet, and other amenities. The hotel's website is **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**

Participants are responsible for making their own housing reservations with Quality Inn and Suites. Be sure to tell reservations you are with the National Field Organizing Project to get the preferred room rate. Limited host housing is also available on a first-come, first-served basis. Every effort to assist with transportation to and from the church will be made but cannot be guaranteed. Participants requesting host housing should check the box on the registration form indicating that request. Those in host housing will need to arrange for their own breakfasts.

Please note on the registration form if you have any food allergies/restrictions or if you need vegetarian or vegan options.

To register, download and print a copy of the registration form. Complete the form and mail it with your check or money order (payable in US funds to Brethren Mennonite Council) for the registration fee to:

National Field Organizer  
c/o The Institute of Welcoming Resources  
810 West 31st Street  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55408

The registration confirmation will include a short article we would like you to read before arriving and further information we need from you to help the trainers better know your needs and questions. Dress is casual. We will attend worship on Sunday morning with the host church. For additional information, contact Anita Bradshaw, National Field Organizer, **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**, 612-791-8217.

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## LGBTQ Christian Youth Retreat

**March 28-30, 2008**  
**Pocono Mountains, Pennsylvania**

This retreat is sponsored by the Lutheran/Bryson LGBT Task Force of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Christian teens in 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or are questioning their affectional orientation are invited to attend a weekend of spiritual reflection, affirmation, and fellowship. The theme of the retreat is "Wonderfully Made," taken from Psalm 139, verse 14 (NRSV), "I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made." The retreat is designed for youth who are interested in discussing and understanding sexuality alongside their own spirituality.

Participants will be able to share their stories and struggles to remain people of faith despite the negative message they frequently receive from much of Christianity. Through Bible studies, they will experience the chance to learn of our Creator's unalterable love for all of creation. Through worship, they will encounter the sacred as an integral part of themselves. Through affirmation and community building, they may build spiritual relationships lasting a lifetime.

Inspiration for the retreat has come from "The Naming Project," a faith-based youth group serving youth of all sexual and gender identities based in Minneapolis, which produced the first ever Christian church camp in 2004. The camp was featured in the documentary *Camp Out*, [www.campoutmovie.com](http://www.campoutmovie.com), now viewable on line at Logo, [http://www.logoonline.com/shows/dyn/camp\\_out/series.jhtml](http://www.logoonline.com/shows/dyn/camp_out/series.jhtml).

"Wonderfully Made" will be held in the Pocono Mountains in Pennsylvania, March 28-30, 2008. The cost will be \$45.00 before March 1 and \$60.00 after that date. Scholarship assistance is available. Registration materials are available at [www.sepayouth.org](http://www.sepayouth.org).

The retreat is being planned by the Lutheran/Bryson LGBT Task Force of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The group's mission statement: To support and affirm the full inclusion of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning persons within the community of God through education, outreach, and consultation. Questions about the camp may be directed to Fred Wolfe, [unilu@uniluphila.org](mailto:unilu@uniluphila.org), or 215-387-2885.

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Associational is a periodic e-newsletter of the Association of Welcoming & Affirming Baptists, a network of 68 churches and hundreds of individuals who have joined together to advocate for the full inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons within Baptist communities of faith. Please forward this e-newsletter to interested friends. Copy relevant information into your organization's bulletin and newsletter. To subscribe, send an e-mail to [subscribe@wabaptists.org](mailto:subscribe@wabaptists.org) with SUBSCRIBE in the subject line. To be removed from this list, send an e-mail to [unsubscribe@wabaptists.org](mailto:unsubscribe@wabaptists.org) with REMOVE in the subject line. To read back issues of Associational, go to: [www.wabaptists.org/associational.htm](http://www.wabaptists.org/associational.htm).

To learn more about the Association, go to: [www.wabaptists.org](http://www.wabaptists.org)