



The Association of Welcoming & Affirming Baptists

Associational

An Ongoing eNewsletter from the Executive Director

Special Edition ~ November 14, 2008

From the Chairperson: Growth and Changes for AWAB

Dear members and friends of AWAB,

When I was a child, my experiences of Thanksgiving were ones of spending the day with extended family, eating lots of food and playing raucous games with the other kids. As the time would come for the Thanksgiving meal to be served, all of us herded into the dining room to be seated. The large dining room table was always elegantly set and brimming with food. Yet that was the adult table; the kids always sat at folding tables set up around the periphery of the big table. I remember eating my Thanksgiving day feast, enjoying the meal, but always wistfully looking at the big table and longing for the day when I would be big enough to sit up there.

At this Thanksgiving season, AWAB has grown to the place where we have earned the right to sit at the big table. Throughout this year, we have done the tough work of building our organizational infrastructure to the point where we are now poised to burst forth on the national welcoming scene like never before. We have solidified our Council, shored up our organizational framework, and launched a process of dreaming big dreams that will thrill you and, hopefully, entice you to join with us in an ever more engaged way in the future.

Along with this work has come the realization for us on the AWAB Council that our staffing structure needs to change in order to accommodate and cultivate the organization we are now and are yet becoming. Thus on November 1, Ken Pennings, AWAB's former Executive Director, moved into a new role with us, becoming the first AWAB Director of Community Outreach. For most of you, this means that Ken will still be the person whom you talk to as your church considers becoming a welcoming and affirming congregation or as you plan to be involved in regional or national events with AWAB or our ecumenical partners. We will soon be hiring another person to serve as the interim Executive Director. That person will assume responsibility for overseeing AWAB's fund development and managing the day-to-day administrative tasks of running an organization such as ours.

The AWAB Council is very pleased to announce these exciting changes in the way we live and breathe in the Baptist community and the larger welcoming movement. As always, we remain committed to securing the day when LGBT persons of faith are welcome in all of our churches. We also remain committed to you, wherever you may be on your own personal journey of LGBT inclusion. We would love to hear from you and we look forward to seeing you at the big table as we dine and fellowship together.

Heather Rittenhouse
AWAB Council Chair

AWAB Announces Leadership Restructure

Meeting in Indianapolis, IN, October 2-4, the Council of the Association of Welcoming & Affirming Baptists created the position of Director of Community Outreach. This new role will be filled by Rev. Ken Pennings, who transitioned from the position of Executive Director. Ken began as Director of Community Outreach on November 1 and an Interim Executive Director is being sought.

INSIDE

- **From the Chairperson: Growth and Changes for AWAB** – pg 1
- **AWAB Announces Leadership Restructuring** – pg 1
- **Interim Executive Director Sought** – pg 2
- **New Address and Contact Information** – pg 2

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.

© 2008, The Association of
Welcoming & Affirming Baptists,
All rights reserved

Barbara Hulsing, Editor

608-255-2155, mail@wabaptists.org
PO Box 42544, Washington, DC 20015

The Director of Community Outreach will serve as the primary conduit in communication with member congregations and prospective members. As DCO, Ken will be involved with various projects to support and nurture AWAB members while reaching out to faith communities that are in various steps of the welcoming and affirming process.

Over the last year, AWAB has worked to restructure the organization with future growth and needs in mind. “The restructuring allows AWAB to strengthen relationships with members and ecumenical partners, as day-to-day operations of the organization will now be managed separately from our outreach efforts,” said Council Chairperson, Rev. Heather Rittenhouse. “We are very excited to have Ken take on this new role. His passion for this work and for the inclusion of LGBT people of faith within Baptist churches is unquestioned.”

Currently, AWAB is in the process of seeking an Interim Executive Director. Heather and the rest of the AWAB Council will guide the organization through the ensuing transition period.

Founded in 1993, the Association of Welcoming & Affirming Baptists is an organization of churches, groups, and individuals that have pledged to be inclusive and affirming of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons of faith and their families. Member organizations include 75 churches and one seminary. AWAB is a partner in the Institute for Welcoming Resources and over the last two years has attained grants to focus on organizational structure and development of a youth camp program for member congregations.

Ken can still be contacted via the same phone number and email address. You will be hearing more about AWAB's transition and other exciting changes in our publications, *The InSpiriter*, *Associational* and online at www.awab.org. If you have questions, please contact Chris Boisvert, Council member, at 925-459-9053.

Interim Executive Director Sought

For questions or information about the half-time position of Interim Executive Director please contact Jill McCrory, Council member, at 301-404-5323 or email admin@wabaptists.org. A copy of the IED job description can be downloaded at: www.awab.org/ied.pdf.

New AWAB Address and Contact Information

Our new mailing address is: PO Box 42544, Washington, DC 20015. Our phone number remains the same. You may reach us by email at mail@wabaptists.org, admin@wabaptists.org or ken@wabaptists.org.

Associational is a periodic e-newsletter of the Association of Welcoming & Affirming Baptists, a network of 75 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 with SUBSCRIBE in the subject line. To be removed from this list, send an e-mail to unsubscribe@wabaptists.org with REMOVE in the subject line. To read back issues of Associational, go to: www.wabaptists.org/associational.htm.

To learn more about the Association, go to: www.wabaptists.org