



The Association of Welcoming & Affirming Baptists

Associational

A Ongoing eNewsletter from the Executive Director

Issue 19 ~ March 12, 2006

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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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From the Executive Director

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This Lenten season, I'm reflecting on the ONE mystery of the life, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, and how this ONE mystery informs and inspires our welcoming and affirming movement.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender / Allied people have experienced the freedom of embracing themselves as the people God created them to be, the freedom to be their true selves in the context of Faith Community and Society, the freedom Jesus himself experienced.

LGBT-Allied people also know--all too well--marginalization, victimization, crucifixion, as Jesus knew. But gratefully, the ONE mystery, which we Christians experience as a fountain welling up into everlasting life, doesn't end in crucifixion. But rather, resurrection.

We LGBT-Allied people live into resurrection by investing all we are and all we have into creating the kind of society where there are NO MORE VICTIMS, a society in which no one else, ever again, is nailed to a cross to die: a society without nails.

We are NO LONGER VICTIMS! We are the free and happy queer people, creating a free and happy society.

May we journey together this Lenten season with this vision and this hope!

For a free and happy society,
Rev. Ken Pennings

Executive Director, The Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists
ken@wabaptists.org, (608) 255-2155

Bay Area Gathering, March 18-22

"Turning Brokeback Mountain into an Open Range"

- **March 18, 10 am-1 pm: Community-Building Event:** Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church, 3534 Lakeshore Ave., Oakland, CA 94610, (510) 893-2484. All welcoming & affirming Baptists of all denominations and affiliations invited!
- **March 19, 10 am: Worship:** First Baptist Church, 2345 Channing Way, Berkeley, CA 94704 (510) 848-5838, fbcbek@aol.com. Preacher: AWAB Director Ken Pennings.
- **March 22, 12 noon-2pm: BLT (Baptists Lunching Together):** Ken Pennings will be the presenter. At Grand Lake Gardens (ABC Retirement Facility), 401 Santa Clara Ave., Oakland, CA, 94610 (1/2 mi. from Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church). Cost \$8. Call Joan Thatcher (510.843.4656) for reservations by Monday, March 20th. Capacity: 50 people.

AWAB Churches Seeking Pastors

Granville, OH: First Baptist Church, Granville, Ohio, a small, active Welcoming & Affirming congregation, seeks a full-time pastor steeped in social justice. We welcome applicants from any denomination who value substance over style and questions over answers. For more information, see our Website: www.firstbaptistgranville.org. Contact: Reverend Alan Newton, Executive Minister, American Baptist Churches of the Rochester-Genesee Region, 1100 S. Goodman St., Rochester, NY 14620. Phone: (585)340-9520. Email: anewton@crcls.edu

Memphis, TN: Prescott Memorial Baptist Church, Memphis, TN (ABC/Alliance of Baptists/BPFNA), is beginning its search for a senior pastor. Rev. Martha Brahm will be leaving in mid-January. Tom Walsh is a member of the search committee, and will be receiving resumes and profiles at pastorsearch@prescottchurch.org. Write to Prescott Memorial Baptist Church, 961 Getwell Rd., Memphis, TN 38111, 901-327-8479.

Ithaca, NY: First Baptist Church, Ithaca, NY, is seeking an interim pastor, and eventually a full-time senior pastor. Contact (607) 273-5800. Or write FBC, Dewitt Park Mall, Ithaca, NY 14950.

Madison, WI: first Baptist Church, Madison, WI, is seeking a Minister of Discipleship. Contact (608) 233-1880. Or write FBC, 518 N. Franklin Ave., Madison, WI 53705.

Palmer, AK: Church of the Covenant is looking for a staff person. "We're looking for a seminary graduate, who is committed to social ministries. While Church of the Covenant cannot afford a full-time pastor, our related ministries certainly can. A gay person, male or female, would be welcomed. A partnered person would be welcome. The idea is to find someone who ultimately would replace me. After all, I am 78. Palmer is a great place for someone who wants a little adventure and who loves a variety of people." – Rev. Howard Bess, pastor of Church of the Covenant.

H. Darrell Lance Retires as Editor of *The InSpiriter*

This June, Dr. H. Darrell Lance will be retiring from many years of outstanding service to AWAB as Editor of *The InSpiriter*. AWAB will present Darrell with love gifts at the Southern Welcoming & Affirming Baptists Luncheon at Southside Church, Birmingham, AL, Sunday, April 23, 12:30 pm. Please submit written tributes and financial gifts on Darrell's behalf by April 19th, 2006, to AWAB, P.O. Box 259257, Madison, WI 53725. Written tributes may also be emailed to ken@wabaptists.org.

Kind Words

From Rev. Howard Bess, Pastor of Church of the Covenant, Palmer, AK, to Dr. H. Darrell Lance, Editor of AWAB's newsletter, *The InSpiriter*:

Dear Darrell,

I received the bulk package of The InSpiriter in yesterday's mail. Great edition. I have already read every word. Darrell, your editorial was a gem. Truly homophobia is imponderable. The roots are complex and deep. Thank you for your attempt to unravel those roots.

I was truly impressed and moved by Melissa McBain's piece about her play, "Altar Call." I am going to get a copy. I really believe it can be produced here in Palmer. My latest project is the PALMER ARTS COUNCIL. Six weeks from now we are opening with a production of the Broadway hit "Proof." I would love to do "Altar Call."

Ken's leadership is exciting.

Shalom,
Howard Bess

Calendar of Events

Ken Pennings' Speaking Engagements:

March 12, 2006, 10:30 am...Ken will preach at First Baptist Church, 518 N. Franklin Ave., Madison, WI, 53705. Call (608) 233-1880.

March 19, 2006. Ken will preach at First Baptist Church, 2345 Channing Way, Berkeley, CA 94704 (510) 848-5838, fbcbcrk@aol.com.

March 22, 2006, 12 noon – 2pm. Ken will be the presenter at BLT (Baptists Lunching Together) - a dialogue group of ABC folks. To be held at Grand Lake Gardens (ABC Retirement Facility), 401 Santa Clara Ave., Oakland, CA, 94610 (1/2 mi. from Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church). Cost \$8. Call Joan Thatcher (510.843.4656) for reservations by Monday, March 20th. Capacity: 50 people.

April 23, 2006, 12:30 pm – 3:00 pm. Ken will speak at the "Let's Get Acquainted" Welcoming & Affirming Baptists Luncheon, at Southside Baptist Church, 1016 19th St. South, Birmingham, AL. Call (608) 255-2155.

April 26, 2006, 7 pm. Ken will speak at Oakhurst Baptist Church, 222 E. Lake Dr., Decatur, GA, 30030. Call (404) 378 3677.

May 21, 2006, 8:30 am & 10:30 am. Ken will preach at Unity Church of Madison, WI, 601 Tompkins Ave., Madison, WI 53716. Call (608) 221-1376.

June 4, 2006, Ken will preach at The South Church, 501 S. Emerson, Mt. Prospect, IL 60056, in the morning (847) 253-0501, and at Grace Baptist Church, 5253 N Kenmore Ave, Chicago, IL, 60640, in the evening (773) 334-9003.

October 1, 2006, (tentative) Ken will preach at First Baptist Church, 416 Niagra Street, Eau Claire, WI, 54703. Call (715) 832-0642.

October 15, 2006, Ken will teach and preach at University Baptist Church, 4554 Twelfth Ave. NE, Seattle, WA, 98105. Call (206) 632-5188.

November 5, 2006, Ken will teach and preach at Drexel Hill Baptist Church, 4400 State Rd., Drexel Hill, PA, 19026. Call (610) 259-2356.

AWAB's Big Event for 2006:

June 26-29, 2006 - Tapestry: Live, Laugh, Love Lead is a joint National GLBT-Allies Gathering, sponsored by AWAB, UCC Coalition, and GLAD (Disciples of Christ), at University of Indianapolis, Indianapolis, IN. There will be discussion, workshops and worship led by each of the convening groups. Brian Dixon and Kevin Rose are AWAB's representatives on the planning committee. For more information go to www.tapestry2006.org

Regional AWAB Gatherings: 2006 Expanding the Welcoming Church Movement 12-Stop Tour:

March 18-22, 2006...San Francisco Bay Area AWAB Gathering, in Oakland and Berkeley, CA. Contact Event Coordinator Jesus Portillo (510-326-8097, jportillo@att.net).

“Turning Brokeback Mountain into an Open Range”

Saturday, March 18: Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church, 3534 Lakeshore Ave., Oakland, CA 94610, (510) 893-2484.

- 10:00 am Welcome, Prayer, Music
- 10:20 am Reports from each welcoming congregation
- 10:50 am Break
- 11:00 am "Expanding the Welcoming Church Mov't" - Ken Pennings
- 12:00 pm Lunch (Potluck)
- 1:00 pm Conclude

Sunday, March 19: AWAB Director Ken Pennings will preach at First Baptist Church, 2345 Channing

Way, Berkeley, CA 94704 (510) 848-5838, office@fbc-berkeley.org

Wednesday, March 22, 12 noon – 2pm. Ken Pennings will be the presenter at BLT (Baptists Lunching Together) - a dialogue group of ABC folks. To be held at Grand Lake Gardens (ABC Retirement Facility), 401 Santa Clara Ave., Oakland, CA, 94610 (1/2 mi. from Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church). Cost \$8. Call Joan Thatcher (510.843.4656) for reservations by Monday, March 20th. Capacity: 50 people.

April 21-23, 2006...Southern AWAB Gathering – Let's Get Acquainted! (In conjunction with The Alliance of Baptists Convocation), Birmingham, AL. AWAB's council will attend the Alliance of Baptists Convocation, April 21-23, and then will host the Southern AWAB Gathering on April 23rd, at Southside Baptist Church, 1016 19th St. South, Birmingham, AL, 12:30 – 3:30 pm. To register for the Convocation, visit www.allianceofbaptists.org. For more information about the Southern AWAB Gathering, contact Ken Pennings (608-255-2155, ken@wabaptists.org).

June 2-4, 2006...Chicagoland AWAB Gathering. Contact Ann-Louise Haak (alhaak@lakestreet.org) for more information.
Sunday AM - Ken Pennings speaking at The South Church, Mt. Prospect, IL;
Sunday PM – Ken Pennings speaking at Grace Baptist Church, Chicago, IL.

July 21-22, 2006...New England AWAB Gathering. Hosted by First Churches, 129 Main St, Northampton, MA, 01060, (413) 584-9392. Contact Bruce Baker at bpenke@aol.com, (617) 669-2974

September 29-October 1, 2006...Upper Midwest AWAB Gathering (MN / WI). Contact Rev. Dr. JoAnne Juett (pastor of First Baptist Church [ABC], Eau Claire, WI), if you would like to help in the planning of a Wisconsin/Minnesota AWAB Regional Gathering to be held in Eau Claire, WI (JoAnne Juett, 715-832-0642, jjuett@sbcglobal.net).

October 13-15, 2006...Northwest AWAB Gathering. Hosted by Seattle First Baptist Church and University Baptist Church, Seattle, Washington. Contact Rev. Craig Darling (craigdarling@companis.org) or Rev. Tim Phillips (tim@ubcseattle.org) for more information.

October 20-22, 2006...Texas AWAB Gathering. Hosted by University Baptist Church, 2130 Guadalupe St., Austin, TX 78705. Contact Bill Cox, (512) 619-4909, bcoxa@yahoo.com.

Note: 2006 AWAB Regional Events are being planned for Washington D.C.; Lake Erie Region; and North Carolina. Stay tuned for more information!

Events Sponsored by AWAB's Partners:

See www.welcomingresources.org (calendar)

July 10-15, 2006 BPFNA Summer Conference: *Becoming the Beloved Community*, Atlanta, GA. Keynote: C. T. Vivian. Contact (704) 521-6051, bpfna@bpfna.org.

July 14-15, 2006, Whosoever Ministries, Inc. will host a conference at Virginia Highland Church in Atlanta, Georgia. The **"Reaping the Spiritual Harvest"** conference will feature many inspiring workshops and keynote speeches from Harry Knox, director of the Human Rights Campaign's faith and religion program and Candace Chellew-Hodge, the founder of Whosoever Ministries, Inc. Renowned lesbian Christian singer Marsha Stevens will give a special concert. Visit www.whosoever.org/conference/

July 27-30, 2006 *Together in Toronto: Claiming an Open Spirit*. Joint gathering of Affirm United, the Brethren Mennonite Council for Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Interests (BMC), and Lutherans Concerned / North America (LC/NA). Contact Ralph Carl Wushke (416) 532-8591, rwushke@interlog.com.

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and Institute for Welcoming Resources (IWR) to Join Forces

**Unprecedented Merger of Secular and Faith-Based Organizing efforts
Audio Press Conference**

**Monday March 13
1PM EST, Noon CDT, 10AM PST
Call-in number: 800.289.0544;
prompt code: 5439802**

Audio Press Conference. The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force to announce that the Institute for Welcoming Resources, an umbrella organization for leading Protestant lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) Welcoming Church Programs, will merge with and become a program of the Task Force. Matt Foreman, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force; Rev. Rebecca Voelkel, Institute for Welcoming Resources program

director Institute of Welcoming Resources members will participate in the audio press conference.

Why is a religious LGBT rights organization merging with a secular LGBT rights organization? Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people have faced unprecedented attacks from right-wing religious forces who falsely frame their anti-LGBT political agenda as the 'religious perspective.' This merger, an unprecedented joining of LGBT secular and faith-based organizing, is designed to provide new resources, training and strategies that will increase the number of people of faith supporting equality for LGBT people. The IWR represents 1,500 welcoming congregations with an estimated 1 million members, a vast network of people of faith dedicated to LGBT equality.

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, founded in 1973, is the oldest national organization working for the rights of LGBT people; the IWR has constituent groups that have been working for change in their denominations since 1974. The Task Force and the IWR will bring these parallel streams of activism together to exponentially increase the profile, resources and size of the pro-LGBT faith movement.

Institute for Welcoming Resources:

The Association of Welcoming & Affirming Baptists — American Baptist Churches USA & Alliance of Baptists
Gay And Lesbian Acceptance (GALA) — Community of Christ
More Light Presbyterians — Presbyterian Church USA
Open & Affirming Ministry, The Christian Church — Disciples of Christ
Open and Affirming (ONA) Program — The United Church of Christ
Reconciling in Christ Program — The Lutheran Church
Reconciling Ministries Network — United Methodist Church

Shower of Stoles Project Gifted to the Institute for Welcoming Resources

Dear Welcoming Church Movement Colleagues,

It is with great joy and deep gratitude that the Institute for Welcoming Resources has accepted the gift of the Shower of Stoles Project. After ten years of tireless work, Martha Juillerat, National Field Organizer for the Shower of Stoles Project, has discerned that it is time to move on in her ministry. As she was making this decision, she met with members of the Institute

for Welcoming Resources (IWR). It became clear that IWR, whose mission is to resource, equip and collaborate with the welcoming church movement, is a natural partner for the Shower of Stoles Project.

And so, IWR has accepted the gift of the Shower of Stoles Project. The crucial work of sharing the stories of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender lives and our calls to leadership in our churches will continue, only under the name of the Institute for Welcoming Resources. If you would like more information about the Shower of Stoles Project or to order a display of stoles, please contact us: StolesProject@welcomingresources.org Or www.welcomingresources.org 612.821.4397 (IFWR)

As with any new thing, we need very much God's presence and guidance as well as the prayers and support of our communities. And so we would ask that you hold us in your hearts and lift us up in your meditation and prayer. God has called all of us to the gospel task of witnessing to God's Extravagant, Abundant, Ridiculously-Joyous Welcome. The Institute for Welcoming Resources and the Shower of Stoles Project is but one manifestation of this call. May our work and yours be blessed.

Gratefully,
Rebecca Voelkel, Executive Officer
Institute for Welcoming Resources

Sermon by Dr. Mary Ann Tolbert

Dr. Mary A. Tolbert delivered an address called, "Keeping the Faith, Preaching the Good News" at the recent "Breathing Life" event sponsored by the open and affirming organizations of Disciples and United Church of Christ.

www.wabaptists.org/associational/KeepFaith.pdf

Condolences

Nadean Bishop (the retired pastor of University Baptist Church of Minneapolis) is known to many in AWAB as a vital and key voice and supporter. We

grieve with Nadean and her partner Cheryl Palmer, the death of Nadean's 44-year-old daughter.

Nadean Bishop & Cheryl Palmer, 10130 Manning Ave North, Stillwater, MN 55082
651-430-009, bisho007@maroon.tc.umn.edu

A Friend's Request

Who out there is both openly gay and in some capacity related (no doubt, formerly-related) to the GARBC (General Association of Regular Baptist Churches) either as a (former) pastor, missionary or in some form of ministry or lay person and/or a graduate from one of the fellowshiping colleges and/or seminaries? If any such person would be interested in contacting me in order to further consider some means of on-going connection as a gay/GARBC group, I would be interested in hearing from that individual. Email: stephen_parelli@othersheep.org.

Rev. Steve Parelli, MDiv
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<http://www.othersheep.org> (Organization's Web Site: Academic)

Associational is a periodic e-newsletter of the Association of Welcoming & Affirming Baptists, a network of 59 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.
