

YYA Report

Prayer	2
Terms	3
Role Play	4
Biblical Self Defense	5
Spirited Youth	6

Annual Report

Moderator	7
Interim Director	8
Financials	9
Communications	10
ONA	11
Board Reps	12

So...You want to be a Straight Ally?

Here is the outline of a workshop to be given this summer during several UCC Regional Youth Events. Thinking about the information below will give you the basis for creating your own workshop or session or for becoming a strong straight ally.

Heterosexual Privilege

- What is it? What are some examples?
- Have you noticed this in others?
- Have you noticed this in yourself?

Know What You're Talking About: Be Informed

There are four levels of becoming an ally

1. Awareness
 - How are you similar to lgbtq people?
 - How are you different?
2. Knowledge & Education
 - Acquire knowledge about...
 - sexual and gender identities
 - laws, policies, and practices
 - policies of your local church
 - "Open and Affirming"
 - lgbt culture
3. Skills
 - communicate the knowledge you learned
 - take workshops
 - do role plays
4. Action
 - What things can you do?
 - The "normalization" of lgbt people

What May Discourage You *These things can be overcome*

1. The assumption that you're lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, down-low...
2. Straights will put you down: "it's not important"
3. Discrimination directed at you as a result of your involvement
4. LGBT people may be leery of you or may assume you're lgbtq but just not out yet
5. You may feel out of place in gay culture
6. Gay people may question your motives

The Benefits of Being an Ally

1. You open yourself up to the possibility of close relationships with an additional percentage of the world.
2. You become less locked into sex-role stereotypes.

3. You increase your ability to have close and loving relationships with friends of the same gender.

4. You have opportunities to learn from, teach, and have an impact on a population with whom you might not otherwise (knowingly) interact.

5. You may be the reason a family member, coworker, or person in your community finally decides that life is worth something and that dependence on chemicals or other substances might not be the answer.

6. You may make the difference in the lives of adolescents who hear you confront anti-lgbt epithets that make them feel as if they want to drop out of school. As a result of your action, they know they have a friend to whom they can turn.

The UCC
Coalition
for LGBT
Concerns



God's Extravagant Welcome

This section contains basic information for sexual- and gender-minority young people. Figuring out your sexual orientation or gender identity can often be confusing. Also useful are the “terms” found in the workshop information section, and the resources in the bibliography. Even if you’re not at any of our summer events, this information is helpful to have for young people in your own congregation or on your campus.

Congregational Prayer: Affirming Sexual- and Gender-Minority Youth & Young Adults

“I know that I am your creation, and you have given me a wonderful gift in my orientation.”

Spirit of the Universe, Almighty One, this day we celebrate youth and young adults in our congregation. We celebrate the diverse gifts of a diverse people. We celebrate the lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and transgender young people among us, and welcome them as part of the body of God, as part of this unique assembly of your people. We declare this a safe space for them, for we know there are places where young lesbians, young gay men, young bisexuals, and young transgender people do not feel safe or welcome. We ask your special blessing on them, since we know you love them unconditionally. We ask you to empower us to love them—to love all—unconditionally in your great example. Amen.

© 2001 Pilgrim Press, from *Coming Out Young and Faithful*, by Leanne McCall Tigert and Timothy Brown. Used by permission.

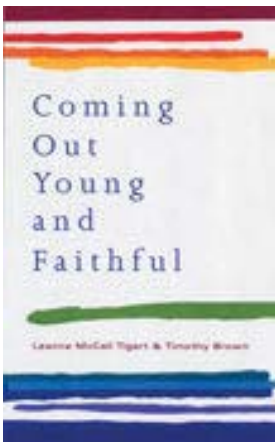
A Prayer for Coming Out as Gay, Lesbian, or Bisexual

Creator God, I am learning things all the time. It is a gift to be young and to get to know you and your world, your beautiful creation. I am also getting to know myself, and I’m discovering that sometimes I am attracted to members of my gender—other girls (or boys). Sometimes the things I feel are strong and deep. Sometimes it even feels like love. Sometimes I feel

scared about these feelings. Sometimes I feel wonderful about them. I know that I am your creation, and you have given me a wonderful gift in my orientation. I pray for your supporting presence as I become more comfortable with my feelings. I pray for your guidance, that I may know when it is the right time for me to let other people know about this part of me. I pray for your

supporting presence if I should be rejected, knowing that you, God who created me, will not reject me, that you will affirm me as part of your beautiful creation. In you I trust. Amen.

© 2001 Pilgrim Press, from *Coming Out Young and Faithful*, by Leanne McCall Tigert and Timothy Brown. Used by permission.



A Prayer for Coming Out as Transgender

(adaptation of above)

Creator God, I am learning things all the time. It is a gift to be young and to get to know you and your world, your beautiful creation. I am also getting to know myself, and I’m discovering that sometimes I feel as if I were another gender. Sometimes I feel scared about these feelings. Sometimes I feel wonderful about them. I know that I am your creation, and you have given me a wonderful gift in my gender identity. I pray for your supporting presence as I become more comfortable with my feelings. I pray for your guidance, that I may know when it is the right time for me to let other people know about this part of me. I pray for your supporting presence if I should be rejected, knowing that you, God who created me, will not reject me, that you will affirm me as part of your beautiful creation. In you I trust. Amen.

© 2001 Pilgrim Press, from *Coming Out Young and Faithful*, by Leanne McCall Tigert and Timothy Brown. Used by permission.

What if I'm gay? Lesbian? Bisexual? Transgender? What if I'm questioning my orientation or identity? What if my friend is gay?

Know that you are not alone. Approximately 10% of the population is lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. You are perfectly "normal" the way you are—the way God created you to be. Lots of people question their sexual (or affectional) orientation or gender identity. You probably already know other people who are also sexual- or gender-minority folks. You may wish to talk with someone you trust or one of The Coalition staff or representatives at your particular event or in your congregation. Feel free to pull one of us aside, call or email if you'd like to talk. You may wish to read some materials to learn more about sexuality, sexual orientation, and gender identity. See the brief bibliography included in this newsletter; request more detailed resources from the Youth and Young Adult Program; and be sure to visit The Coalition's display table at the summer events you attend.

Who Am I? Some Basic Terms

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

The attraction one feels towards members of the same or another gender

AFFECTIONAL ORIENTATION

Term similar to sexual orientation (above), which acknowledges that in addition to sexual feelings, attractions to other people can also involve things like attraction to personality traits, such as a sense of humor, intellect, and the way a person shows caring

GAY

1. A male who is predominantly attracted to other males sexually, romantically, and emotionally
2. An umbrella term sometimes used to describe all sexual- and gender-minority people (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender)

LESBIAN

A female who is predominantly attracted to other females sexually, romantically, and emotionally

BISEXUAL

An individual who is attracted to either gender sexually, romantically, and emotionally (not to be confused with people who have physical anatomy of both sexes)

TRANSGENDER

An individual who identifies as male but is in a female body, or as female but is in a male body

INTERSEXUAL

An individual who has physical anatomy of both genders

LGBT

An abbreviation for "lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender." Sometimes it also includes "qqi," which means "queer, questioning, and intersexed" or "sgl," which means "same-gender loving"

MARRIAGE

1. A religious rite (ceremony) in which two people affirm their love for and commitment to each other in their faith community and are given the support of that community in the relationship
2. A civil rite requiring a license by the state in which two people affirm their love for and commitment to each other, and are given many civil benefits, such as hospital visitation rights, inheritance rights, and insurance benefits.

COVENANT

An agreement or commitment between two or more people or groups (such as a local church and pastor, a teenager and parent about driving the car, marriage partners [same-sex or heterosexual], etc.)

FIDELITY

Loyalty, faithfulness

INTEGRITY

Wholeness, the state of being integrated

What about my parents? What about my family?

One thing that happens when you self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender is that you may wonder how to share the information with your family. Only you can decide what is the right time and situation for that. You may wish to give your parents one of the books in our bibliography, available from the YYA Program. *Coming Out Young and Faithful* has a section in it for parents. You may wish to contact PFLAG (Parents, Friends & Families of Lesbians and Gays) www.pflag.org. There is a group of UCC Parents of LGBT Children whom many people have found helpful and loving. Here is some contact information:

National Co-Chairs
Bob and Joyce Strommen
14603 Lake Avenue
Lakewood, OH 44107
216-228-9635
rstrommen@msn.com

In addition, there are many local contacts. You can locate contacts by chapter online at: <http://www.uccCoalition.org/programs/parents.html>.

Want to talk? Get information about coming out? Schedule a workshop?

Contact the Youth and Young Adult Program!
Timothy Brown
YYA Coordinator
PO Box 460455 Glendale Station
Denver, CO 80246
yyacoord@uccCoalition.org
720-941-1062 voice
720-941-1061 fax

For all youth and young adults—What can I do?

Peer Role Plays for Discussion

Act out some of the situations below with a friend or your entire youth group or campus ministry group. What would you do? Play different roles. Discuss the situation afterwards.

“A friend has asked you to be present while s/he tells her/his parents s/he is a lesbian/gay man.”

1. Your roommate comes out to you as lesbian/gay. S/he is afraid s/he will go to hell for being a homosexual, and quotes Leviticus 18:22 “You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.” What do you say?
2. It is parents’ weekend. A friend has asked you to be present while s/he tells her/his parents s/he is a lesbian/gay man.
3. Your campus minister tells you that s/he has referred a young adult to an ex-gay “change ministries” and “reparative therapy” program. How do you react? What do you say to the campus minister?
4. A transgender young adult has begun to attend your campus ministry program or youth group meetings. Some of the other students make rude comments. How do you react to the students? How do you interact with the transgender person?
5. Your campus faculty senate or congregation is considering a non-discrimination policy. They have asked your campus ministry for advice. What things should the policy include? Sexual orientation? Gender identity? What is the role of your group as a recognized organization of people of faith on campus?
6. Parents of a friend call you over Spring Break because their son/daughter, your friend, has run away. S/he left a note making it clear that s/he is struggling with her/his affectional orientation and may be suicidal. You know where s/he is, but fear for her/his safety should s/he return home.
7. You are bisexual. You are at a meeting of your youth group council or campus ministry leadership council. You have participated in the group for three years, and are an officer. The group wants to pass a resolution denying leadership positions to lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender people. Do you come out? Why or why not? What do you say?
8. You are a lesbian/gay man. You want to bring your girlfriend/boyfriend to the youth group or campus ministry Christmas party. What do the two of you decide to do?
9. You are a transgender person. You feel called by God to ordained ministry. You discuss with your campus minister what may be facing you in your denomination, and try to decide which college or seminary to attend next year.
10. You are attending an ecumenical gathering of college-aged Christians away from home. You and a friend notice a peer you know attending the after-hours lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender event. Your friend sees you but pretends not to have noticed you. You did not before know this person’s orientation/gender identity. Later, do the two of you offer support? Why or why not? If so, how?

“You and a friend notice a peer you know attending the after-hours lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender event.”

Biblical Self-Defense Key Points

Sometimes the Bible is used to bully people, and sometimes those people are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. Sometimes people misuse scripture to condemn. Here are some key points to know.

What did Jesus have to say about homosexuality (or same sex behavior)?
NOTHING!

What percentage of the Bible addresses same-sex behavior?
Less than .0001%

Genesis 19:1-11

1. In the culture of desert tribal people, the lives of travelers may depend on the kindness of those who can take them in to protect them from attack by bandits or by wild animals.

Lot offered kindness to the strangers who were traveling.

2. Has anyone ever seen a city where everyone, “to the last man” (verse 4) was gay? Not even in San Francisco are all the men gay.

3. This story is about rape. For one group to show its dominance over the other, rape was used. The Hebrew verb used is *yadda*, to know.

4. Notice how Lot offers his two virgin daughters to the mob surrounding the house. This is not a kind thing for a father to do.

5. *According to Jesus*, as well as in other places in the Bible, this story is about inhospitality. See Ezekiel 16:49; Leviticus 18:22, Leviticus 20:13

1. The codes established in Leviticus are for priesthood from 4,000 years ago. The culture was attempting to define itself to be unique from the Gentiles around it. The codes in Leviticus are today only followed by Hasidic Jews.

2. There are many other prohibitions in Leviticus which are not employed nowadays. Some examples:

- Eating shellfish is prohibited.
- Touching the skin of a dead pig is prohibited.
- Wearing tattoos is prohibited.
- Planting two different kinds of seeds in the same field is prohibited.
- Anyone who has cursed their father or mother should be put to death.
- Trimming your beard is prohibited.

Romans 1:26-27

Based on the translation of two Greek words, *physin* and *para physin*, these verses probably refer to going against one’s own nature, i.e., straight people engaging in same-gender behavior, or glbt folks behaving as if they were straight.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10

1. The translation of *malakos* from Greek means “soft.” It has been interpreted as “homosexual” or “pervert.”

2. The translation of the term *arsenokoitoisis* not clear. Its appearance in the Bible is the earliest known occurrence of the term. It is a combination of words for “male” and “bed,” is a verb, and is plural. The word also appears in 1 Timothy 1:9-10.

3. The word “*homosexual*” first existed in 1869.

Suicide Intervention

Did you know that lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth account for one third of teen suicides, and are yet only 10 percent of the population? (No statistics are available for transgender youth.) Want to help do something about it? The Coalition’s Youth and Young Adult Program trains people in suicide intervention and prevention. We use three programs. *suicideTALK* is a 1.5-2 hour workshop designed to help people become comfortable talking about suicide. *safeTALK* is a 4-hour program designed to train people age 15 and older to be suicide-alert helpers. The ASIST program (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) is a two-day suicide intervention training for those aged 16 and over. We often add a special additional module to focus on lgbt youth.

Rainbow Comma Buttons

At this summer’s events, you will see that The Coalition’s Youth and Young Adult Program is participating in the UCC’s *God Is Still Speaking*, campaign. Many of our members and allies will be sporting rainbow comma buttons. These are a fundraiser for the youth and young adult travel fund, and are available for a donation of \$5.00. You can purchase them at our display tables, or by ordering them from United Church Resources.

ONA Spirited Youth

1. WHAT IS IT?

"ONA-Spirited Youth" is a new initiative of the United Church of Christ Coalition for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Concerns. It is a public listing of any Open and Affirming (ONA) event/action/activity by a group of UCC youth or young adults, which raises awareness of or extends a welcome to gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, a questioning (GLBTQ) young people. Through this listing The Coalition wishes to recognize and celebrate the "ONA Spirit" of many of the youth and young adults in the United Church of Christ!

2. WHY IS IT CALLED "ONA-SPIRITED YOUTH"?

"ONA" refers to the "Open and Affirming" movement in the UCC, which seeks to include people of every color, age, gender identity, etc. whether they identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual, or are in the process of discovering who they are in this regard (questioning). "Spirited" captures both the enthusiasm that many youth bring to this issue and our belief that it is God's Spirit which is at work in youth (and adults alike) as we make this witness for an inclusive church.

3. WHY IS THIS BEING DONE?

The Coalition knows that there are many UCC young people who share the vision of Church and world where people of all colors, ages, genders, and abilities, of every sexual orientation, will respect and learn from one another. In their attitudes and activities, these youth already model an "ONA Spirit" that is open to people of all sexual orientations. The Coalition wants the UCC, the wider Church, and society to know that many of our denomination's youth and young adults are inclusive in their thoughts and actions. They are a dynamic part of shaping a more welcoming community in Christ!

4. WHO CAN BE LISTED?

Any group of UCC youth/young adults (a youth group, Confirmation Class, young adult group, camp, conference, retreat gathering etc.) can be listed as having done something showing "ONA Spirit."

5. DOES THE GROUP HAVE TO BE PART OF AN ONA CHURCH?

No, while a group may be part of a UCC church listed with The Coalition as ONA, that is not necessary for it to appear on the "ONA-Spirited Youth" list. We want this list to include a wide variety of groups and activities.

6. WHAT KINDS OF THINGS CAN BE LISTED?

Any event, action, or activity by a group of youth or young adults which increases their awareness of issues related to the lives of LGBTQ youth or welcomes them into a group or gathering.

Here are some examples of what might appear on the list:

January 1998: Sr. High Youth Group, First Congregational Church, Someplace, IL - held a weekend retreat on "Homophobia: Who Needs It?"

March 1999: Confirmation Class, United Church, Gummibear, VA - had 2 classes on understanding sexual orientation

April 1999: New England Youth Event - declared this to be an "Open and Affirming" event (safe and welcoming space for all LGBTQ youth)

7. WHAT TIME PERIOD DOES THE LIST COVER?

The list will cover one year's time. So that a year's activities can be announced at The Coalition National Gathering and the General Synod (which occur in June/July), the year will run from June-May.

The first listing will be for activities from June 1998 - May 1999. If your group has done or does an activity that fits the criteria above during that time, send it for the "ONA-Spirited Youth" listing!

8. HOW DO WE GET OUR ACTIVITY ON THE LIST?

A group wishing to be listed must send the following information:

- 1) Name of group, contact person with address, UCC church/body you're connected to
- 2) Description of its "ONA-Spirited" action or event (what did you do? where? who participated? any brief reflection on its effects etc.)
- 3) IMPORTANT: If the group includes any members 18 years old or under, the report must be signed by one youth and one adult leader (noting position: group leader? pastor? other?) Young adult groups (all members 19 or older) need only the signature of a group member. Note: sending news will be taken as an indication that you are willing to have it publicly announced (see # 10 below).

9. WHERE DO WE SEND THIS NEWS OF OUR ACTION/EVENT?

Send it to The Coalition's Youth and Young Adult Program Coordinator: Timothy Brown, YYA Program-The Coalition, P.O. Box 460455 Glendale Station, Denver, Colorado 80246-0455, or email, yyacoord@uccCoalition.org

10. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE COALITION GETS OUR NEWS?

- 1) Your action/event will be listed on the "ONA-Spirited" Youth page at the Coalition's web site.
- 2) You will receive a certificate acknowledging your "ONA-Spirited" activity.
- 3) Periodically, these activities will appear in ONA and Youth and Young Adult (YYA) program newsletters, and possibly in other UCC publications.
- 4) News about ONA-Spirited Youth will be shared at The Coalition's annual National Gathering and at General Synods. We look forward to hearing from you!

Hi, I'm the new kid, and I'm late to the party

BY: Rev. Barbara Rathbun

In my opinion, the best way to make a good first impression is to be late to your first meeting. At least, that's the way I handled it. Let's just back up a few months...

An invitation went out in Ripples and on the Coalition website for new members for the Board of Directors, at the same time inviting those who might be interested to apply for the interim Executive Director position. I didn't even read the job requirements for the IED (which, no, is not explosive, but does require careful attention to detail). But the Board of Directors, now, that was a challenge I was interested in.

We all have spiritual gifts, and one of mine seems to be the ability to attend board meetings, to see the dynamics of a group at work, and to suggest ideas about how we can work together moving forward. Learning from the past, treasuring tradition, seeing the possibilities of what the larger organization might do support its membership and ministries and to flourish in the days ahead—all are important to keep in mind as a board member.

So, after leaving Ripples in my Inbox for about a month, I filled out the form and sent it off. I heard from Kathy Church, who told me that I'd be

interviewed by two others. This was different from some of my other boards—usually a Nominating Committee is happy to just get enough people to fill in the blank spots. It had been a while since anybody wondered about what I really thought, or why I'd make a good board member.

Among the questions I was asked were "Why do you want to be on the Coalition Board of Directors?" and "If you are named to the Board, can you attend face-to-face meetings on the following dates?" and "Are you willing to participate in monthly or bi-monthly telephone conferences?" and "What do you think the Coalition can do in the future?" We spoke briefly about what I did (I'm an ordained minister, specializing in intentional interim ministry) and what kind of experiences I'd had with people who were G, L, B, or T (I've served a closeted gay church, have helped shepherd two churches through successful O&A processes, and have an amazing and delightful gay nephew). They said "Thanks" and "Don't call us; we'll call you" and assured me I'd hear from the Coalition at some later date.

Well, all that turned out to be true. I did hear from them, and I was invited to attend the Board meeting that was held in New

Orleans in February. Jim Bond, another Board member, said he was going to arrive in New Orleans about the same time, and we could carpool or taxi-pool or get a bus, or something. "Simple," he said. "I do this in every city."

So I hopped on a plane, transferred in Atlanta (in the Southeast, you have to go through Atlanta, even if you're on the way to heaven), and went to the gate to get on the New Orleans plane. Of course, the plane was broken, and it was going to be a while before it was fixed. I called Jim's cell phone and told his voicemail I was delayed; that he should go on ahead, and I'd get to the retreat center where we were gathering slightly after my plane landed, whenever that might be. And it happened just like that.

I arrived about an hour late, and after dumping my luggage in my assigned room, trotted on down to the meeting. Let me tell you, this group is focused! When I walked in, they looked up from their work, said hi, and got right back on track. When we took a break, they introduced themselves, were very friendly, and seemed to appreciate my questions and observations. I wasn't the only New Kid there; Beau and Gwen were also there for the first time. One of the things I found

striking about the way this Board works was the unspoken dedication to the Coalition, its mission, and its future. No one expected the new members to do something amazing to prove themselves, or to wait politely till everyone else had spoken, or to defer to more longstanding members. When we asked a question, we got good, clear, full answers. When we made suggestions, the others listened and added our ideas to the conversation. When we had good ideas, they were welcomed. When we needed clarification, we got it.

People listen to each other on this Board, and each person is respected for who s/he is, for their experience, for their knowledge and training. The common goals are clear, and we're all expected to enhance the Coalition with our own gifts and graces.

As the Coalition celebrates its twenty-fifth year, and as we look forward to our work in the future, we'll be honoring our work in the past, and looking forward to new ways of serving God and the church who welcomes us all. It's a good and exciting time to be here! And I'll be on time, too.



Report from the Interim Executive Director



Gwen Thomas
Interim Executive Director

First, note that this is not a full-calendar year report. This reflects the events, occurrences and the state of the organization from February 2010 to present.

Overriding themes for the Coalition have been change and transition. In the midst of these challenges, the organization has stayed on course. In fact, the challenges of change have brought forth strengths and opportunities.

My goal as Interim Executive Director has been to focus on the Coalition's most important and urgent priorities and to do all that is reasonably possible to further the ongoing causes and concerns of the Collation. I also intend to promote a seamless transition for the incoming Executive Director to begin his or her duties. To this end, I my short term action steps are aligned with the recently adopted Strategic Plan. Thus far I have addressed the following issues:

Review and assess database, contact list.

The project coordinator, communications coordinator and I developed a four stage plan to improve internal and external communications with members, partners and stakeholders.

Re-vitalize and mobilize the ONA Consultants throughout the denomination.

I developed webinar and resource on advanced ONA training. There have been training or gatherings with four active ONA groups (Florida, Penn Southeast, Massachusetts and the Southeast Conference). There will be a for regional gathering with the Minnesota ONA groups in July.

Devise and implement a strategy for attending to the 2003 general Synod resolution regarding transgendered persons.

As Executive Director I have been the Board liaison with the newly formed UCC GenderFold Action Alliance; formerly the Trans Caucus. I had a lunch meeting with prior to the first gathering and discussed areas of concern and opportunities for collaboration with the Coalition.

Re-build and improve intra-denominational and interdenominational Coalition relationships.

I have represented the Coalition in a number of ecumenical partnership groups and projects. I attended the Fellowship Leadership Retreat in Atlanta and will attend the joint Fellowship-MCC conference in late June. Additionally, I attended the Bishop and Elders Council meeting in Washington

D.C. I am participating in the planning of the Believe Out Loud Conference which will address advanced welcoming/ ONA training such as political activism and field organizing. I have spoken behalf of the Coalition at churches in Alabama and Mississippi who are interested in affiliating with the UCC. Finally, I attended the UCC Collegium meeting to bring greetings from the Coalition and to give them a status update on our plans and progress.

Collaborate with board, National UCC staff and Coalition on organizational capacity building.

Currently, I along with the Board, the Project Coordinator and the denominational liaison, Rev. Mike Schuenemeyer, are strategizing and implementing plans for increasing ONA churches, having UCC representation in upcoming ecumenical training and short-term fundraising.

These foci support the necessary steps in getting through this transitional period and will hopefully provide direction for the next phase and next level of goal setting and milestones for the Coalition.

Greetings from the Moderator

Well, the journey from Grand Rapids to San Diego has been an interesting one. We had some highs and lows at National Gathering 2009 and General Synod. It is never easy to make changes in your staff or board and we have had numerous changes. We have had to accept responsibility for the failure of some of our internal processes and work to repair them.



This has been a rough year financially. Grant funders have tightened their budgets and placed increasing requirements and made choices on where to spend their money. Individuals and churches have continued to struggle and had less to spend on justice issues. While we have tried to control expenses, some money must be spent to move forward with programming. Despite the fact that my church is not yet ONA we have given \$100. If we could get all 870 ONA churches to give just a \$100 we could be financially secure. We are working towards that goal and if everyone worked on their own congregation for that type of commitment it would be a great start.

Beth Zemsky guided us through a comprehensive strategic planning process and we now have a plan and have started taking action. Our resolution to expand the ONA criteria to include gender identity, gender expression is one of the actions we have taken. Associated with that process was the development of the job description that is posted on our website which we hope more clearly defines what we believe we need in an Executive Director. We are working with our Interim Executive Director to establish some policies and procedures to make us a more functional organization that more adequately supports and encourages our staff. Our spring board meeting was held in conjunction with the Methodists as a trial for having the boards of all the denominations with welcoming movements meet in 2011. It is important to recognize that we are not alone in the journey and to utilize the lessons learned by each other to lessen the load for us all.

We have been greatly blessed by having numerous volunteers to help us in this journey. Besides the board of directors, we have a dedicated group of ONA consultants, the YYA advisory committee, ONA advisory committee, nominating and search committees. Without them, the board could not perform their functions. Many of our faithful volunteers have been forced to make decisions about their involvement with the coalition and deal with personal, educational, work and health issues. Our two greatest successes continue to be our ONA and YYA programs. While you will hear much more about YYA from Tim I need to say that we are the leaders in the welcoming church movement when it comes to YYA issues and the skill and caring of Tim Brown is one of our greatest assets. While we continue to struggle to live out Open and Affirming it is a growing movement and we now have over 883 congregations. At the Florida Conference Annual meeting I was the presenter of the resolution to make us an Open and Affirming Conference which was overwhelmingly approved. Gathering this year will focus on ONA and our 25th Anniversary but more importantly how to live into a future that includes all of our diversity.

I have been on the board for six years and am finishing my second year as moderator and feel blessed that I have been able to be a part of this endeavor for this time. I have experienced what so many others have previously in their work with the Coalition. There have been too many highs to mention, friendships forged, periods of extreme frustration where it seems there will never be enough time or money to do what we want to do. If we stay focused on our guiding principles and working towards God's extravagant welcome we will find justice for all.

Peace and blessings to all as we move forward in our work together.

The Board of Directors

Moderator
Kathy Church

Vice Moderator
Paul Bradley
(June –May)

Treasurer
Rich Fleutchling

Secretary
David Heckman
(June –Feb)

Loyce Edwards
(Feb-April)

Barbara Rathbun
(April-June)

Members at Large
Jim Bond

Monica Cross

Loyce Edwards
(June-Feb)

MacArthur Flournoy
(June-Aug)

Beau Heyen (Feb-
June)

Barbara Rathbun
(Feb-April)

Lydia York

Ex Officio
Mike Schuenemeyer

Gwen Thomas



Rich Fluechtling

Financial Report

The Coalition weathered the financial challenges of 2009 due to some fortunate timing of grant support. This support helped to offset lower contributions income and fund a strategic planning process.

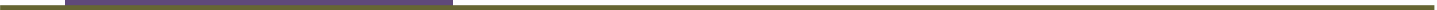
Total assets and liabilities decreased primarily from the decrease in deferred revenue as advanced from grant sources was used for specified activities. The market value of investments increased recovering some of the decrease from 2008.

The income and expense statement shows Members & Friends contributions down from last year. Church and Conference basic support also decreased. As noted above grant income earned was significantly higher. Contributions in-kind are from board members who funded their travel expenses personally or from clergy expense accounts. Contributions toward the Ann B Day/Donna Enberg Endowment Fund continue regularly from a few individuals. Resources sold are mostly Open and Affirming and Youth and Young Adult materials that can be ordered from United Church of Christ Resources. Event revenue is from National Gathering; it is much higher due to greater attendance prior to General Synod in Grand Rapids. In 2008 the National Gathering was held jointly with The Fellowship which handled most of the financial activity. Investment income and other income show small variances from last year.

Total expenses increased from last year as more activity was funded with grants and a larger National Gathering. Staff expense increased mostly from higher health insurance costs. Office/Administration total is up from the strategic planning process and conversion to a new database. Resource Costs are less due to timing of reprinting of some items. Savings on postage comes from more use of e-mail. Printing increased with the restarting of a printed newsletter late in 2009. Travel expense showed some savings as leader training for YYA suicide awareness was funded in 2008. Of course, General Synod net cost shows in 2009; this total goes up every Synod. Communication total is lower from less contracted hours for website and electronic newsletters. Event expense is much higher from National Gathering changes as noted above. Fund raising costs are more from increased printing costs. Support other ministries decrease is due to doubled up payments in 2008. Misc is those unexpected various things that need to be paid for.

Net income is a modest deficit from the challenges in 2009. This total is a little less than positive amount in 2008.

The financial records of The Coalition under go a CPA review each year; a copy of the review can be obtained by request.



Balance Sheet	12/30/2009	12/30/2008
Assets		
Cash	\$65,709.51	\$106,255.73
Other Current Assets	919.81	208.85
Prepaid Expenses	5,204.37	8,864.29
Investments (at market value)	39,184.07	28,414.53
Total Assets	\$111,017.76	\$143,743.40
Liabilities & Fund Balances		
Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	\$8,217.08	\$2,463.22
Deferred Income	25,000.00	68,169.00
Total Liabilities	33,217.08	70,632.22
Net Assets		
Operating	3,367.71	9,281.79
Designated	74,432.97	63,829.39
Total Net Assets	77,800.68	73,111.18
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$111,017.76	\$143,743.40
Income and Expense Statement	12/31.2009	12/31/2009
Income		
Operating Income		
Members & Friends	\$51,883.38	\$71,309.20
Churches, Conferences, etc	31,866.47	41,130.38
Grants	143,169.00	99,998.00
Contributions In-Kind	5,260.24	1,903.53
Endowment Contributions	1,295.00	1,940.00
Resources Sold	5,765.16	6,909.27
Event Revenue	25,844.00	7,715.00
Investment Income	642.25	914.90
Other Income	614.27	309.11
Total Operating Income	\$266,339.77	\$232,129.39
Expense		
Operating Expense		
Staff Expense	\$123,697.50	\$119,735.86
Office/Administration	30,249.68	16,440.99
Resource Costs	5,844.99	8,782.50
Postage	2,201.80	3,288.07
Printing	3,047.39	2,428.40
Travel	37,101.73	39,089.39
General Synod (net)	6,143.39	0.00
Communication	10,945.28	12,842.69
Event Expense	35,745.66	14,798.03
Fund Raising-Printing/Postage	9,846.16	8,643.82
Support Other Ministries	1,000.00	2,350.00
Misc	2,696.77	1,398.18
Total Operating Expense	\$268,520.35	\$229,797.93
Net Income	-\$2,180.58	\$2,331.46

*Internally prepared on accrual basis

Youth and Young Adult Program



Tim Brown
Commissioned Minister

This has been another busy year. Telephone calls, emails, instant messages, text messages, and the occasional letter by US Mail. Pastoral care and support, reference letters, conference calls, meetings of various types. Here are some of the events and highlights.

General Synod 2009, Grand Rapids

The Youth and Young Adult Program offered workshops at the General Synod. They were *Ho-Ho-Homophobia* and *How to Be a Straight Ally*. We also held "Safe Space" after hours. I was present during most of the youth and young adult gatherings. We staffed an display table in the exhibit hall.

Council for Youth and Young Adult Ministries

Our representative for this year has been Austin Malaski from North Dakota.

Youth and Young Adult Advisory Council

The following individuals have served on the Coalition's YYA Advisor Council: Wade Zick, Minnesota Conference, Austin Malaski, South Dakota, Rev. Kyle Lovett, Northern California-Nevada, Betzi Yungclas, South Central Conference, Rev. Kelly Burd, Ohio Conference

YouTube, Facebook, Videoclips and the Internet

Over the year, a number of individuals recorded videoclips about why *Open and Affirming* is important, and how it matters to youth. The people are youth, young adults, and adults; men, women, trans; authorized ministers and laity; from geographically diverse

areas of the denomination. The clips are available on YouTube individually. They are being compiled as short video for distribution at this year's youth events.

Our Whole Lives

Erik Koepnick and Timothy Brown completed the *Our Whole Lives* Training for Facilitators for Young Adults and Adults. Timothy Brown also completed levels 7-9 and 10-12.

Biblical Self-Defense for Facilitators

We have developed a training program for those wishing to learn to present one of our most popular workshops, *Biblical Self-Defense*, which is a study of the lgbt "slammer" scripture passages. It is being presented June 4-6 in the Northern California-Nevada Conference by Erik Koepnick and Timothy Brown. This workshop continues to be our most requested, both inside the UCC and from secular groups. We have created a packet of readings for this workshop, and obtained copyright permissions for limited reproductions of certain materials. The packet is only available with the training.

Ecumenicism

Timothy Brown represented the Coalition at the gathering of the Reconciling Ministries Network, our counterpart organization in the United Methodist Church. The meeting was held in Estes Park, Colorado, September 2009.

Suicide Intervention and Prevention

Betzi Yungclas continues to be a faithful volunteer in our suicide intervention and prevention work. Betzi and Tim co-presented ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) for UCC staff at the Church House in Cleveland in March. Also attending were staff from the Wisconsin and Minnesota

Conferences. Tim also presented briefly at the Colorado LivingWorks conference, and presented safeTALK at Community UCC in Boulder, Colorado. Betzi and Tim also both participated in the LivingWorks International Conference in Orlando, Florida, making both church and lgbt youth connections in the USA and abroad. We distributed several copies of our *Life or Death* packet. Conversations have been held with several organizations and conferences about offering these workshops.

Regional Youth Events

Please check out the various youth events on the website under the YYA tab to get allk locations and details

Network of Wider Church Youth Ministries

A new UCC organization has been formed, NowCYM. It is an organization for conference and HUGs youth staff. The group met at the Walker Center in Boston December 1-3. Timothy Brown made a presentation on "Safe Church" policies and practices. Packets were distributed to the attendees.

New York Youth Event – great success!

- Two sessions of *Biblical Self-Defense* workshop with youth and adults. Very interested in content
- Great kids with great questions, and adult leaders interested in presenting the content themselves with their own youth groups.
- Showing (partial) of *The Bible Tells Me So*
- *Safe Space*
- Additional videoclips made
- Interviewed by a teenager doing a report on same-gender marriage

Board of Directors of the Office of Wider Church Ministries



Oliver Martin

Dear Sisters and Brothers: My Board committee assignments are as follows:

Wider Church Ministry Board:

Budget Committee, United Church of Christ Health and Wholeness Advocacy Committee

Common Global Ministry Board:

Mission Personnel Administrative Committee_Africa Area/Program Committee

Board Update as of May 2010

One of our priority Board Duties continues to be related to the advancement of Board operations from a **(4) four Covenanted Ministries Board Model** to a **single Governance model** in an effort to streamline Board Duties as recommended by the Governance Follow-Up Team of the Board.

As a Board we have elected to host 1 annual face to face meeting and conduct our committee meetings via

telephone conference calls and webinar which will net a savings of over \$35,000.00 in meeting expenses for 2010.

The Wider Church Ministries Board unanimously voted to adopt the 2010 Budget expenditures cap not exceeding disbursements.

If you need a full report of all Board motions passed, contact me separately at martinow@aol.com and I will email you a full report.

While the Wider Church Ministry is saddened the board has accepted that Rev. Cally Rogers-Witte has removed her name for consideration to serve as your Executive Minister, an officer of the United Church of Christ, and co-executive of Global Ministries starting in 2011.

The Board has implemented a search committee for the open position and a formal application process will begin in early fall.

General Synod Nominating Committee



Eric Smith

I have enjoyed the first year of my privilege of representing the UCC Coalition for LGBT Concerns on the General Synod Nominating Committee, in no small part because this committee does not meet at all in the first year of the General Synod biennium. While the national setting staff members responsible for supporting this committee have begun their work this year by soliciting nominees from Conferences and the

Historically Represented Groups like the Coalition that are entitled to representation on General Synod boards and committees, the Nominating Committee will meet for the first time via conference call in July, and again in person in Cleveland in January. The deadline for nominations from Conferences and HUGS is November 15, 2010. Nominations from this committee will be presented to the 28th General Synod in Tampa,

July 1, 2011. also be used for your Web site. Microsoft Word offers a simple way to convert your newsletter to a Web publication. So, when you're finished writing your newsletter, convert it to a Web site and post it.

A great way to add useful content to this newsletter is to develop and write your own articles, or to include a calendar of upcoming events or a special offer that promotes a new product.



Open and Affirming Setting



Kathie Carpenter

In this year of the 25th national anniversary of ONA, the ONA family continues to be healthy and growing. The pace of new ONA churches being listed since the last Coalition Gathering (ending June 25, 2009) has been consistent with the previous one-year period.

From July 2009-July 2010, we listed **66 ONA churches** (including 4 new church starts, 1 "Church in Conversation with the UCC," and 1 campus ministry). In the nearly 10-month period since the last National Gathering (June 25, 2009), we have listed **54 new ONA churches** (including 4 new church starts). When that is extrapolated to a 12-month period, the numbers would be **65 new ONA churches**. As this is written (June, 2010), we have numerous churches in the final stages of their process that have notified us that they are ready to vote to become ONA. Many churches send in requests to be listed

without our having known they were in the ONA process. Many churches hold their annual meetings in May and June. I expect that, when the churches actually submit their statements and we deal in real numbers at the 2010 National Gathering, we will meet or exceed the totals of last year.

ONA churches and settings have been listed from the following states from June 25, 2009 until June, 2010: Arizona – 2, California – 5, Colorado – 1, Connecticut – 2, Florida – 3, Illinois – 1, Kentucky – 2, Maine – 2, Massachusetts – 7, Michigan – 3, Minnesota – 1, Missouri – 1, New Jersey – 1, New York – 5, North Carolina – 1, Ohio – 4, Oklahoma – 1, Oregon – 2, Pennsylvania – 2, Rhode Island – 2, Texas – 2, Vermont – 1, Washington – 1, Wisconsin – 1, Wyoming – 1

New ONA churches were listed in 25 out of 38 UCC Conferences in this time period.

In the past year, I have seen energy, enthusiasm and clarity about the issues involved in communications from churches that request listing as ONA. Although it is hard to prove a cause and effect relationship, this period coincides with the 25th ONA anniversary and the campaign of awareness for inclusion of gender identity and gender expression in all ONA processes and all new ONA statements. The new criteria go into effect July 14, 2010.

Thanks to every church and setting that declared itself ONA this year and blessings to every church and setting now in or contemplating the ONA process. The Holy Spirit continues to work through our congregations to show the many ways to live out God's Extravagant Welcome.

Report from Communications



Chris Paige

In a year of very public transitions for the organization, the communications program has tried to keep an eye on the many parts of UCC Coalition that continue, while also building for a stronger future. In Ripples content, we took the summer as an opportunity to highlight and review the pioneering work of our youth and young adult program, which continues under the leadership of Tim Brown. Updates through the year on changes in ONA policy, board developments, executive director searches (interim and permanent), and the National Gathering 2010 planning process have provided a steady stream of updates for both Ripples and the website. Plus we've worked to keep up with events and resources that can help you get connected to communities and activism beyond the UCC Coalition.

Behind the scenes, we've also been working on a variety of strategic developments. With a new database in place in the Cleveland office, we are refining our systems so there is better coordination between our many sources of data -- our regular mailing list, our Ripples mailing list, and our lists of ONA settings, chapters, and consultants. We've had some delays in our implementation timeline, but hope to begin sharing some exciting new developments with you soon.

Meanwhile, we depend on the United Church Resources office to distribute our printed materials for us. Their office reorganization and website replacement meant that connections between the Coalition's website resource section and the UC Resources online listings were broken for a time. We are mostly past that transition now and eager to get back to thinking about content development. As a staff, we are aware of just how much room there is for growth in the resource listings on the website. If we could identify just a few volunteers who could spend a few hours per month helping the staff keep up with the latest publications, it would be a great contribution. If you are interested in exploring such a volunteer possibility, please contact Gwen Thomas at ed@uccCoalition.org.