

Making Room for All - 2013 National Conference

Thursday, October 24 – Saturday, October 26
Central Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan

KEYNOTE SPEAKER - JUSTIN LEE: “Taking a Stand without Having a Standoff”



Justin Lee is the founder and executive director of The Gay Christian Network, an interdenominational organization building bridges between Christians on LGBT issues. Justin speaks frequently across the country using his own unique blend of humor and analysis, and has been featured in numerous media outlets, including *Dr. Phil*, *Anderson Cooper 360*, NPR's *All Things Considered*, and a front page article in *The New York Times*. Justin is the author of *Torn: Rescuing the Gospel from the Gays-vs.-Christians Debate*, which was released last year to rave reviews from both sides and endorsed as “fresh air” by the outgoing Archbishop of Canterbury. In addition to his weekly podcast, Justin blogs for the Huffington Post and on his own blog, “Crumbs from the Communion Table,” at JustinLee.co.

CONFERENCE PREACHER - REV. ADRIENE THORNE



The Reverend Adriene Thorne is an Associate Minister at Middle Collegiate Church in New York City. She completed her Masters of Divinity degree with an emphasis in art and psychology at The Pacific School of Religion. Prior to ministry, she pursued a nearly 20-year career in the performing arts, including time as a Rockette. Rev. Thorne served the Reformed Church in America's Commission on Christian Worship for three years and was the Visiting Artist at New Brunswick Theological Seminary from 2010–2011. She is currently pursuing counseling studies at the Blanton-Peale Institute where she is working towards a theology of healing in which the arts play a central role. Her key assertion is that the arts have the ability to drop us into the center of ourselves and our healing more quickly than anything else. Adriene Thorne is married to Colin St. Rose and

together they are raising a little girl named Petal.

CONFERENCE MUSICIAN – DAVID LOHMAN



David Lohman composes music for the church that expresses God's extravagant welcome, including "For All the Children," which won national attention during Minnesota's marriage equality campaign. A native of Minneapolis, David is Faith Work Coordinator for the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force's Institute for Welcoming Resources, which works to help the church become a truly welcoming place for people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, races, classes, and abilities. He has also served as Minister of Music for Living Table United Church of Christ in Minneapolis since 2001.

David has spent much of his musical career as a musical theatre conductor and pianist, including over three years as associate conductor for the first national company of The Phantom of the Opera. He is a published arranger, holds a B.A. in acting, and did his graduate work in conducting at the University of Cincinnati's College-Conservatory of Music.

Conference Workshops & Leaders:

JUSTIN LEE: *Practical Tips for Real-World Bridge Building*

We've all been there: You're in a conversation with someone about LGBT issues, when you find the conversation turning into a full-fledged argument. How do you get through without losing your temper? What do you do if they're more interested in preaching than listening? Is it worthwhile to "agree to disagree"? We'll explore these questions with specific, practical advice from the executive director of the Gay Christian Network.

DAVID LOHMAN: *Sing a Song of Welcome*

Music has shown itself to be vitally important to social movements of the past. It can provide us with a strong sense of community, a connection with those who have gone before us in the struggle for justice, and a source of courage in the face of fierce opposition. As people of faith, it is vitally important that the music we sing actually reflects the theology we believe and the God we worship. In this workshop you'll be introduced to songs of God's extravagant welcome from a variety of traditions.



SEAN HARVEY: *LGBTQ and Christian: Living a Christ-Centered Life* (Workshop for LGBTQ people only)

Sean Harvey leads small groups focused on how to live the principles of a Christ-centered life as a member of the LGBTQ community. The group examines several topics focused on how our intentions and actions in all aspects of our lives as LGBTQ people are in line with our Christian faith.

Through these conversations, we continually look for ways to expand the spiritual outlets for healing in our community - a dialogue that promotes personal acceptance,

Christ-centered living, and love for one another. This workshop will model these groups, reflect on their impact, and explore ways that participants can bring this type of curriculum and conversation to their communities.

Sean Harvey is a member of the GIFTS Leadership team at Marble Collegiate Church in New York City and former co-leader of Stephen Ministry at Marble. He holds an MSOD in Organization Development from Loyola University Chicago and a MEd in Counseling from Fordham University and is currently the global practice head of Talent Consulting, Contextual Learning, and Executive Coaching for a New York City-based talent management consulting firm with over 125 coaches and consultants worldwide.

DAVID MYERS: *Most are Straight, Some are Gay, and Why it is that Way: The Science and Future of Sexual Orientation*



David Myers will summarize research indicating that sexual orientation is a natural, enduring disposition, and that the world would be a happier and healthier place if, for all people, love, sex, and marriage went together. He will also review Americans' rapidly changing attitudes, and what they imply *for the future of gay marriage and ordination*.

David Myers is a Hope College social psychologist and ordained Reformed Church in America elder. His 17 books include (with Letha Dawson Scanzoni), What God Has Joined Together: The Christian Case for Gay Marriage.

JAMES BROWNSON: *Bible for Sexual Ethics: Basic Issues and Problems*



How do we properly read the Bible in order to develop a comprehensive sexual ethic, and think about same-sex relationships within that framework? Building on his recent book *Bible Gender Sexuality: Reframing the Church's Debate on Same-Sex Relationships*, Dr. Jim Brownson will explore how we can most effectively understand and apply the Bible's message in a variety of cross-cultural contexts.

Dr. Jim Brownson is the James and Jean Cook Professor of New Testament at Western Theological Seminary in Holland, MI.

JAMIEANN MEYERS: *Our Gendered and Sexual Lives: The Invisible "T" and "B"*



This workshop will give participants a foundation for understanding transgender and bisexual people and the complex issues they face. A combination of activities, including storytelling, Q and A and group brainstorming sessions will address such things as terminology, myths and stereotypes, the differences between sex, gender, and sexual

orientation, participants' own gender and sexual identities, gender-conforming and heterosexual privilege, "coming out," and how to respond as allies and people of faith to trans* and bisexual individuals and their communities.

Dr. JamieAnn Meyers serves as transgender representative and board member of ReconcilingWorks: Lutherans for Full Participation, and is a member of GenderFold in the UCC. She is also a member of T Forward within the Interfaith Working Group, an organizer of TransLutherans within ReconcilingWorks, and a member of the transgender working group in the Institute for Welcoming Resources. JamieAnn takes a social justice and anti-oppression approach to her activism and advocacy, which is focused on transgender and bisexual issues and trainings for allies across the boundaries of all LGBTQIA communities.*

RfA TRAINERS: *Storytelling That Invites Change*



Do you care about building an LGBT-inclusive and affirming church? Then you have a story to tell! It has been said that when the heart is changed, the mind follows, and personal stories have the power to change hearts. In this workshop, trained RfA "Building an Inclusive Church" leaders will coach you in a brief, simple and natural structure for telling your story effectively, so that when the opportunity presents itself, you can invite change!

Leaders: Rev. Patty Fox, Bob Mutch, Marilyn Paarlberg and Rev. Rob Williams.

The leaders of this workshop are current or former members of the Room for All board of directors, and have completed training by The Institute for Welcoming Resources to lead "Building an Inclusive Church" events.

Rev. Patricia Fox serves as minister of spiritual formation at The Reformed Church of Highland Park, NJ, and is also the director of Protestant Campus Ministries at Rutgers University.

Bob Mutch is a groundwater hydrologist, and a partner in Mutch Associates, LLC, an engineering consulting firm in Wyckoff, NJ. Bob also serves as an adjunct professor at Columbia University and Manhattan College.

Marilyn Paarlberg is the Executive Director of Room for All and lives in Albany, NY.

Rev. Rob Williams is the pastor of the United Church of Spring Valley outside of NYC. He also leads the RfA development team.

Responding Through the Arts Opportunity:



Joel Schoon Tanis will facilitate the creation of a corporate piece of art. Take a few minutes and engage with the topic both through words and through playing with paint. Joel will take everyone's spontaneous contributions and assemble a collage that he will paint back into and present at the closing assembly on Saturday morning.

Joel Schoon Tanis is a celebrated painter who has shown his work around the United States and as far away as Kenya. His murals can be found in many schools, children's hospitals and churches (including murals in both Kenya and Zambia). As an illustrator, Joel has contributed to more than a half a dozen books for children. Most notably, he illustrated the New International Reader's Version Kid's Study Bible for Zondervan. He won the Moonbeam Children's Book Award for his book "Swing!" His latest book is "The One, the Only Magnificent Me!" through Mackinac Island Press. In addition to his artistic pursuits, he is also the creator and writer of "Come On Over!" a children's television program that has won two National Telly awards and 13 regional Emmy awards.

Joel lives in Holland, MI with his cool teacher wife Dr. Kathy Schoon Tanis and spunky daughters Harper and Beatrix.

FRIDAY EVENING VOCAL CONCERT: David Lohman & Deb Tiemens



Deb has been singing and composing since she was a child. A 1981 graduate of Northwestern College, she taught K-12 vocal music before returning to serve as an Admissions Counselor there. After completing her master's degree she moved to Washington, DC where she sang with the Oratorio Society of Washington. She was one of 50 metro area musicians selected to perform at the Kennedy Center's annual open house in 1991. Since returning to Iowa in 1992, she has made regular appearances at Prairie Voices' annual Women's Music Festival in Iowa City, performed at SisterSpace Music Festival in Darlington, MD and has been a frequent entertainer for local benefits. Deb is currently the Assistant Director of Institutional Data at the University of Iowa.