

2015 Openings South Carolina Monthly Gatherings

Big Upcoming Topics for 2015

Tuesday, January 27, 2015

Reformation Lutheran Church

- Legislative: *Jeff Ayers*, Chair, SC Equality: Updates on projected legislation affecting the LGBTQ community and what responses are needed.
- Politics: *Bruce Lawrence*, Former Pink Party Co-chair and Founder of Strategic Cents, Fundraiser for Non-profits and Political Campaigns: Local and state prospects for gay and/or gay-friendly candidates; who and how to support them.
- Progressive: *Agenda Wayne Borders*, Progressive Network: What are the big issues - race, race/law enforcement, others - and how can the LGBTQ community support them?
- Religion: *Rev Tom Summers*, United Methodist Clergy person: Overall updates from the denominations; reaching out to more churches; what's next in Marriage Equality?

Reports and Inspirations from the Creating Change Conference

Tuesday, March 31, 2015

Shandon Presbyterian Church, Columbia

Jennifer Tague, Ambassador from SAGE (Service and Advocacy for Gay Elders)

Lester Franzen, The Harriet Hancock LGBT Center

Petie Bradley, President, South Carolina Gay + Lesbian Business Guild

Ann Willbrand, SC Equality

A presentation and discussion by members and advocates within the transgender community. The presentation included information, terminology, facts versus myths, and advice on how to be supportive of the transgender community. Discussion and questions and answers followed.

Transgender 101

Tuesday, April 28, 2015

Washington Street United Methodist Church, Columbia

A presentation and discussion by members and advocates within the transgender community. The presentation included information, terminology, facts versus myths, and advice on how to be supportive of the transgender community. Discussion and questions and answers followed.

Talking Together I: Racism

Tuesday, May 26, 2015

St. Martin's-in-the-Fields Episcopal Church

Panelists representing different points of view including religious, activist, law enforcement, and public policy presented information on issues of racism. What is the role and responsibility of the faith community in improve race relations? Why is Sunday the most segregated day in the country? Why are Blacks disproportionately profiled, arrested, and imprisoned?

Talking Together II: How to Plan a Workshop on Dismantling Racism Through Building Trusting Relationships

Tuesday, July 28, 2015

Reformation Lutheran Church, Columbia

Pastor *Tim Bupp*, Reformation Lutheran Church and Pastor *Leroy Cannon*, Christ Mission Church

A presentation and discussion on a recent workshop on racism facilitated by Pastor Bupp and Pastor Cannon with workshop participants from both churches, both Reconciling in Christ congregations. As a follow-up to Openings May meeting, the tragedy in Charleston losing the Mother Emanuel Nine, and the subsequent lowering of the Confederate battle flag from the State House grounds, Reformation and Christ Mission churches presented information on a recent workshop that explored what separates us and what can bring us together and discussed experiences with racism, the power systems present in our society, and the skills needed to interrupt old patterns and dismantle racism in our community.

Talking Together III: A Continuation of Our Conversations on Racism

Tuesday, August 25, 2015

St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Columbia

Working on issues of race and injustice is similar to tending a garden. First the soil is tilled. Then the seeds are planted. In order to enjoy the harvest, however, much watering and care must take place. The Openings June and July meetings allowed us to till the soil. Now we are ready to plant the seeds in preparation for our harvest. At this gathering we continued this important dialogue. Small group discussions were held with summary and questions and answers following.

The Bible and the Church in Support of Same-Gender Marriage

Tuesday, October 27, 2015

Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary

The Rev. Dr. Brian K. Peterson, Professor of New Testament and Coordinator of Internships, Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary

Despite the Supreme Court decision regarding same-sex marriage rights, the rhetoric in opposition continues to assume and assert that there is one clear and unified "biblical" position on gay marriage. Those who oppose it are lauded as standing up for "biblical principles." Such arguments need to be challenged broadly on the basis of civic rights, from within the church, and from the very biblical tradition that they claim to represent.

Dr. Peterson explored biblical texts and themes that provide a perspective different from the standard texts that tend to end up on signs at anti-gay rallies. [Click here](#) to read Dr. Peterson's presentation.