

Missioner Report
Missioner for LGBTQIA+ Ministry & Engagement
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As the Diocese of Missouri's first Missioner for LGBTQIA+ Ministry and Engagement, I have entered this role in a difficult time. After several years of progress, the national conversation around LGBTQIA identities, especially transgender people, has experienced a sharp backlash. Legislators across America have introduced hundreds of bills to attempt to erase Transgender people from public life and from access to life-giving healthcare. New media campaigns have introduced the slur that LGBTQ+ adults are "Groomers" who pose an existential threat to children.

This is a moment of crisis, and a tremendous opportunity for the Church to follow Christ's call to welcome the stranger and side with the marginalized in a State which has been working to separate marginalized people from their rights. Just as other Christians are often leading the backlash against LGBT+ people, our parishes have the unique position of being some of the only affirming worship spaces in many communities. To help set up this ministry for the future, I have spent a good amount of time listening to the needs across our diocese, and envisioning possible responses. Thus, this first year I have prioritized advocacy, education, and visibility.

Some of the ministry work since March 2022 include:

- Compiling LGBT Christian Resources on the Missioner website, including writing an FAQ for non-Episcopalians to understand our open and affirming stance
- Creating an LGBT+ Saints video Series for Pride Month, including a video to help promote ProMo's efforts in Jefferson City
- Organizing the Diocesan booth for Pride. Our booth created a safe space to encourage festival-goers to write a letter of affirmation to LGBT youth. Over 400 letters were written during the two-day festival, and were then sent around the United States. One recipient of a care package of letters, The Center Project, an LGBT support Organization in Columbia, MO wrote back, "We received your box of letters a bit ago and finally had the chance to sit down and open them tonight! Thank you so so much! The youth loved them, some were moved to tears by the outpouring of love and affirmation. They even took a few extras home to open later when they need support. We appreciate you and your group for thinking of us and spreading the love!"
- Organizing first Eccumenical Pride Mass on the Grass for Tower Grove Pride, gathering participation from several Episcopal, Lutheran, and Methodist churches.
- Guest-Preaching, leading adult formation about Christianity and LGBT identities in Christ Church Cathedral, St. Paul's, Cape Girardeau Pride, Emmanuel Webster Groves, and Trinity DeSoto.

Moving forward, our goals of advocacy, education, and visibility remain at the root of our work for the coming year. Currently, we are planning to deepen our relationships with many of the LGBTQIA+ organizations in our community, such as Metro Trans Umbrella Group, Progressive

Missouri, and THISTL (Trans Housing Initiative St. Louis) to partner and potentially share resources.

Currently some of our planned events and work for the coming church year:

- Trans Day Of Remembrance service, currently being planned with Lot's Wife Queer Ministries
- Working to get an LGBT legal workshop to help with family planning, especially with the looming threat the Supreme Court may overturn Obergefell v. Hodges.
- Improving resource packages for churches and parishioners. There should be a free "One-Stop Shop" on the diocese for educational materials, prayers, and community resources.
- Upcoming presentations with Bishop Johnson at Missouri History Museum on February 16th, and a potential guest speaker on the Church and Queer Holiness.
- Planning to build an LGBTQIA+ Youth Gathering in the coming year, helping gather resources and community, especially in

While these are difficult times, LGBTQIA+ people has been a sustaining and prophetic witness in the Church since the very beginning, and it is our mission to continue to cultivate this community for current and future generations.

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