

## ***"A KALEIDOSCOPE OF INTERSECTIONS"***

**The Room for All National Conference 2017**  
**Thursday, Sept. 28 – Saturday, Sept. 30**  
**Hope Church, Holland, Michigan**  
**Workshops & Speakers**



*\*Indicates open to the public*

**KEYNOTE EVENT - Friday, Sept. 29, 7:00 PM \* (\$10.00 admittance for the public)**

### ***"Enough Room at the Table"***



**Dr. Keisha E. Mc Kenzie** (she, they) is the program director of Believe Out Loud, which unites Christianity and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual community through an online network and empowers Christians to work for LGBTQIA justice. The leading digital platform in Christian faith and LGBTQIA advocacy, Believe Out Loud is a program of Intersections International, a ministry of the Collegiate Churches of New York, and part of the extended family of the Reformed Church in America.

Keisha joined Believe Out Loud as program director in 2016 after serving the program as a strategist and communications/development consultant. Originally from the UK, Keisha moved to Jamaica to study at Northern Caribbean University, a rural Seventh-day Adventist college. Keisha then completed graduate degrees in technical communication and rhetoric in West Texas, and owns McKenzie Consulting Group, a communication, systems-level strategy, and social good firm.

Keisha has served on the board of Room for All's Adventist peer organization, Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International, and is a founding member of #AJustFaith, a multi-faith, multi-ethnic, and multi-generational coalition of LGBTQ faith leaders of African descent. She participates in Adventist congregations in Maryland and New York and appears in the dialogue film on faith, gender, and sexuality in theologically conservative traditions, *Enough Room at the Table*. Keisha believes that all people have inherent worth and dignity; that we deserve a world where all of us can flourish; and that people of faith need to be first in line to help make that world real.

Keisha lives in both the suburbs of Maryland and the heart of Harlem, New York City.



### **Pre-Keynote Concert – "Songs from the Heart"**

**Deb Tiemens**

**Deb Tiemens** (she, her, hers) is a singer/songwriter and a member of the Room for All Board. She is a graduate of Northwestern College where she was also employed as an Admissions Counselor/Assistant Director of Admissions. She later earned a Master's Degree and worked in AIDS Support Services at the Whitman-Walker Clinic in Washington, DC and the Iowa Center for AIDS Resources and Education in Iowa City. In 1993 she was hired at the University of Iowa where she currently serves as the Assistant Director for Institutional Data in the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost. She lives with her dog, Jada, and is passionate about music and the outdoors. She loves to hike, kayak, paddle-board, bike and dine on patios accompanied by Jada's other mother, Sharon.

## CONFERENCE PREACHERS:



### Opening Worship- Thursday, Sept. 28, 7 PM\*

**Rev. Ann Kansfield** (she, her, hers) is a really authentic person who tries hard to follow Jesus and love his people. Most of the time, she does this in New York City, where she serves as a minister at the Greenpoint Reformed Church and as a chaplain for the FDNY. The best decision Ann has made is to marry Rev. Jennifer Aull. Jen is also minister of the Greenpoint Reformed Church, which is the most efficient way they could find to provide the congregation with two pastors and two pastor's wives. Ann and Jen have two children, John and Grace.



### Closing Worship

**Rev. Chad Tanaka Pack** (he, him, his) is Associate Minister at Marble Collegiate Church in New York City. Chad graduated with an M.Div. from Yale Divinity School in 2010. Prior to his ministry studies, Chad worked as a certified public accountant in the financial services industry. He graduated with a B.S. in Economics from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania in 1994. Born and raised in Honolulu, Chad is a fourth-generation Japanese and Korean American. He is a playwright, poet, and performer. He is married to the Rev. Michael Foley, an Episcopal priest. Chad was ordained by the Classis of New York in 2017.

## FRIDAY WORKSHOPS & PRESENTERS

(Participants may choose a total of 3 workshops from among the 3 focus tracks, and may mix tracks.)



### TRACK 1: The Intersection of Sexual Identity/Gender Expression & Race

#### 1A: *"Expanding and Troubling our LGBTQ Theological Imagination"*

**Rodney McKenzie**

There's a deep crisis in the theological imagination of those fighting and advocating for LGBTQ equality; namely, an inability to imagine the full spectrum of who LGBTQ people are. This crisis forces us to believe that issues like racism, Islamophobia, voting rights and black lives matter are issues separate and distinct from LGBTQ equality, and highlights our inability to grapple with the full humanity of LGBTQ people and our inability to imagine God's purposeful creation as a mandate of intersectionality. This workshop will expand and trouble our theological imagination on who LGBTQ people are and what that means for who and what we are advocating for in our churches, denominations and within our organizations.



**Rodney McKenzie, Jr.** (he, him, his) is an experienced community organizer, movement leader and out person of faith who has over fifteen years of experience fighting for grassroots political power in marginalized communities. He holds a Master of Divinity from Union Theological Seminary. By putting James Baldwin, Audre Lorde, Essex Hemphill and the Apostle Paul in conversation, his theological work challenges how theology and LGBTQI politics approaches the intersection of race, class and sexuality through a radical faith frame.

Rodney is currently the Partnership Director at Dēmos, a public policy organization that fights for an equal say and an equal chance for all people. Before joining Dēmos, Rodney was the Director of the Academy for Leadership and Action at the National LGBTQ Task Force, where his organizing work focused on disrupting the national narrative that LGBTQ people aren't people of faith and that people of faith don't support LGBTQ equality. He has also served as the Spiritual Director and Co-Creator of Expansion Church, Executive Director of Resource Generation, and the first Coordinating Director for the Pushback Network. Rodney currently lives in Washington, DC.

#### 1B: *"Reflections of Inclusion in a Refracted Society"*

**Lindsay Jarratt**

To create communities with room for all, we have to understand the walls that have been built between us. Privilege, bias, and inequity refract and divide our communities by limiting who can participate and how much of ourselves it is safe to share with others.

By honestly facing these issues, we can begin to build shared spaces that encourage the full expression and inclusion of each individual's brilliance and beauty. This interactive session will guide participants in reflection and sharing activities to develop understanding of identity, intersectionality, privilege, and bias, how these shape experiences of exclusion, and how we can instead reflect love and inclusion in our communities.



**Lindsay Jarratt** (she, her, hers) is currently a PhD student in the Schools, Culture, & Society program at the University of Iowa, where her focus of study is inequities in educational systems and the constructions of ideologies of difference. Prior to enrolling, Lindsay served for several years as the Diversity Resources Manager at UI, developing and leading programs for equity and inclusion.

After completing her graduate work at Bowling Green State University, Lindsay left her home state of Ohio and trekked across the country to take a job running student residence halls at Western Washington University. When the call for adventure struck again 5 years later, she headed to Iowa. Though she planned to work at the University of Iowa for only a few years, she's now approaching her 10-year anniversary (meeting the love her life, JC, may be somewhat responsible). In her free time, she volunteers with IC Compassion tutoring refugees and immigrants. She also loves to curl up with a book and a cat on her lap!

### 1C: Film Screening: *"Passing"*

Discussion led by **Derek Guy**



This short documentary profiles the lives of three men of color who have undergone gender transition from female to male. The film explores what life is like living as a black man, when no one knows you are transgender. The winner of multiple awards, "Passing" is one of the few films to address the intersectionality of race, gender, and the experiences of those who walk multiple paths in life. Facilitated discussion will follow.

**Derek Guy** (he, him, his) is a social worker in Louisville, KY, where he has spent the last six years dedicated to providing services for children who are in need of help. Since he began the process of female-to-male transitioning two years ago, he has become a strong advocate in the city of Louisville for transgender, queer, and non gender-confirming individuals' rights and equality. Derek was recently named social outreach chair for Louisville Transmen, and is a member of LGBTQ+ Community Coalition, as well as a mentor for Louisville Youth Group. Derek spends his free time with his fiancée and his four year-old son. They enjoy attending Highland Baptist Church, an LGBTQ affirming and welcoming church.



## TRACK 2: The Intersection of Sexual Identity/Gender Expression and Faith



### 2A: *"Queer and Christian: Let's Worship!"*

Rev. Dr. **Tricia Sheffield** & Elder **Darren Major**

A queer-identified person once said, "I don't want to go to a gay church; I want to go to an everybody church." What does it mean to be an "everybody church," specifically when it comes to worship? This workshop will explore the dynamic intersectionality of what it means to be Queer and Christian in culture, and more specifically, in worship. We will also explore the way that liturgy, prayers, hymns/songs, Scripture, and language can be a space to welcome all people into an inclusive and engaging worship, wherein worshipers can see, hear, and feel a celebratory experience of their multi-faceted gender expressions and sexual identities.



**Tricia Sheffield** (she, her, hers) earned her Master of Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary, her Ph.D. in Theological and Religious studies from Drew University, and was ordained as Minister of Word and Sacrament in 2013 by the New York Classis of the Reformed Church in America. She has taught religion and gender theory at the college level, and was the Lilly Visiting Scholar in Religious and Gender Studies at Austin College in Sherman, Texas. Tricia has published and lectured on the relationship between religion and queer theory. She is the Vice President of the Room for All board of directors, and serves as Minister at Middletown Reformed Church in New Jersey.



**Darren Major** (he, him, his) was born in New Jersey, raised in Georgia, and has now lived in New York City for 16 years. A self-described “awesome mix of grits and mimosas,” Darren is a proud uncle to 18 nieces and nephews and two godsons. He serves on the Room for All board of directors, and is a member of Middle Collegiate Church in Manhattan, where he has served as a deacon, elder, and lay leader of their LGBTQ ministry. Professionally, Darren works as the head of the support department and HR for a media publishing company.

## 2B: Film Screening: *“Out of Order”*

What does it mean to love an institution that does not embrace you fully? How can one follow a calling when the reality of gender and sexual orientation threaten to exclude you? “Out of Order” is a film that draws timely attention to the joyful experiences and complex struggles of LGBTQ people who persist in faith and follow God’s call. The workshop will include a showing of the film, and brief Q&A afterwards with Alex McNeill, Executive Director of More Light Presbyterians, and one of the individuals profiled in the film.

**Alex Patchin McNeill**



**Alex Patchin McNeill** (he, him, his) is the executive director of More Light Presbyterians and is the first openly transgender person to head a mainline Protestant organization. He is a lifelong Presbyterian, a candidate for ordination, and a nationally known educator and advocate for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) Christians. Alex holds a Master’s of Divinity from Harvard Divinity School, and a Bachelor’s degree from the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill. He currently lives in Asheville, NC with his wife and three dogs.

## 2C (Applies to all tracks): *“In Our Own Words: Listening for Stories”*

**Emily Janssen**

Stories can be a powerful tool in creating change, and RfA conference-goers bring a wealth of personal experiences and intersecting identities which may sometimes be nudged open through conference workshops and conversations. The stories that emerge can broaden perspective and shape response in the work of LGBTQ advocacy long after the conference ends. This workshop will invite participants to think about how stories emerge through thoughtful listening and conversation, assist in discovering theirs, and offer an opportunity to preserve their story for the benefit of themselves and others.

**Emily Janssen** (she, her, hers) grew up in the RCA and learned a few things about the power of narrative through years of Sundays



in church. She is a graduate of St. Olaf College and works for StoryCorps, an organization that records, preserves, and shares stories of everyday people in order to build connections between us and a more just and compassionate world. Her work has included a stint as a Mobile Tour Facilitator, traveling across the United States “collecting extraordinary stories from ordinary people.” Emily was drawn to the mission of StoryCorps while working as an advocate for homeless youth and witnessing their voicelessness. She saw the potential for

StoryCorps to be an empowering space for those who are marginalized to speak in their own words. “When you’re listening to people talk about their lives, you may only peripherally know what’s on their resume, but you can see who they are. I witness a tremendous capacity for love and forgiveness, and am amazed at people’s resilience.”

## Plenary Panel: *“When God Calls and the Church Hangs Up”*

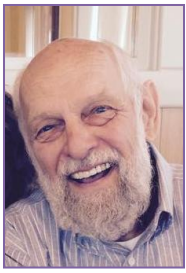
**Rev. Annie Reilly, Moderator**

*Panel Participants: Rev. Donald Jiskoot, Rev. Ann Kansfield, Rev. Annie Reilly, Rev. Chad Tanaka Pack, Rev. Jonathan Vanderbeck*

Navigating the RCA ordination process can be difficult, even more so when one is queer. Join us for a conversation with five Ministers of Word and Sacrament who answered their call to ordained ministry. Each of these individuals took a different path to ordination and along the journey, pushing the RCA to reimagine just who belongs in the pulpit.



**Annie Reilly** (she, her, hers) RfA Board president, is a graduate of Calvin College and New Brunswick Theological Seminary, and was ordained a Minister of Word and Sacrament in the RCA in 2012. She is the Associate Minister at Presbyterian-New England Congregational Church in Saratoga Springs, NY, and also works with LGBTQ youth at the Pride Center of the Capital Region. She is passionate about creating community so that church will feel safe to any person who comes through the door. Reilly is married to Nikki Alcalá Reilly; they live in Troy, NY, with their dog, cat, and chickens.



**Donald Jiskoot** (he, him, his) is a graduate of Northwestern College and Western Theological Seminary. He served as a chaplain in the Federal Bureau of Prisons from 1967 - 1987, and as Endorsing Agent for RCA Prison Chaplains from 1988 to 2015. In that capacity he visited the chaplains on site every two years and wrote evaluations for both the RCA and the Bureau of Prisons. In 1980, Don was named Employee of The Year for the NE Region of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, having been selected from among 16,000 employees for that honor. Don was a featured speaker for the LGBT Pride event at the Federal Prison in Milan, Michigan in June, 2016, where he told the story of his decision to openly acknowledge his sexual orientation after more than 65 years of silence. Don appears in two of RfA's documentary films, "Room for Me?" (2014) and "A Welcoming Space" (2016).

[Note: Bios of the other panel participants appear elsewhere in this document.]



### TRACK 3: The Intersection of Sexual Identity/Gender Expression and Life Journey

#### 3A: "Room for A// Families?"

**Rev. Jennifer Aull**

A nice new gay couple with their two adorable kids has started coming to your church. Now what? Discover ways you and your congregation can support LGBTQ parents and their children that are both helpful and authentic.



**Jennifer Aull** (she, her, hers) is passionate about empowering people to live their fullest lives, a dedication which has been lived out through a wealth of personal and professional experiences. She has a marriage and family therapy practice, serves part-time as a pastor at the Greenpoint Reformed Church in Brooklyn, NY, and has worked as a chaplain in both hospital and hospice settings.



Jennifer is a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, with a Masters Degree in Marriage and Family Therapy from Hofstra University and a Bachelors Degree in English Literature from San Francisco State University. After working for several years as a technology specialist for a number of investment banks, Jennifer attended Union Theological Seminary where she received a Master of Divinity Degree. She is an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ, a member of the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy, and an AASECT certified sex therapist. Jennifer likes cooking and spending time with her wife Ann and their two children, John and Grace.

#### 3B: "In the Light: Caring for LGBTQ Youth"

**Shelley Donaldson**

Being religious has been identified as a protective factor for youth, yet it is also correlated with negative attitudes toward LGBTQ individuals and, for LGBTQ youth growing up in a religious community, an ingrained trauma with negative outcomes including depression and even increased tendency toward suicide. Church leaders, members and parents can be effective in improving outcomes for LGBTQ youth of faith in their congregations as well as in their localities, even achieving transformation of entire communities. This workshop will explore the experiences of LGBTQ youth related to religion and spirituality, including environmental risk factors, information on educating religious leaders on sexual orientation and gender identity and how religious condemnation and support impact the health and well-being of LGBTQ youth. It will also explore techniques for youth to foster the intersection of faith, sexual orientation and gender identity to improve their own health, wellness and wholeness as beloved children of God.



**Shelley Donaldson** (she, her, hers) is a youth worker, pastor-in-waiting, wife, artist, writer, LGBTQ advocate, retreat planner, and a lover of Southern food who grew up amongst the pine trees of Georgia and the marshes of South Carolina. She holds degrees in Philosophy and Art from the University of West Georgia, located in Carrollton, GA, and a Master's of Divinity from McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago, IL. She currently works for Parity as the Retreats Director and with Fourth Presbyterian Church in Chicago, IL, with youth. She spends much of her time doing hands-on ministry with youth conferences, LGBTQ retreats for clergy, painting or making collages, working and writing on Christian Education, and traveling the world in search of the thin-places where the earthly world meets the kin-dom of God through people, culture, and of course, food.

### 3C: “New Wine in Old Skins: The Role of Faith in Lives of Old LGBTQ Persons”

Barbara Satin

This workshop will explore the role that faith plays in the lives of old LGBTQ individuals as they live out their aging journeys, and how communities of faith can understand these issues and respond in ways that are sensitive and affirming to these individuals. Significant research and writing has been done in recent years about the needs and concerns of LGBTQ people as they age. Although the faith component of that aging process has been generically mentioned, it has been unexplored in any analytical way. Meanwhile, there has been research done around the impact of faith on old non-LGBTQ people, but the correlation of those findings to the LGBTQ community has not been explored. As a result, faith communities that see themselves as welcoming to LGBTQ persons have little idea as to what kinds of care and services they can and should offer to LGBTQ old people in their midst. This workshop will provide basic information about LGBTQ aging issues in general; explore what LGBTQ old people in faith settings might be looking for from these communities; and help envision educational resources that may be of value to faith communities wanted to pursue this important mission.



**Barbara Satin** (she, her, hers) is a transgender activist who has been deeply involved with local and national LGBTQ issues, particularly around aging and faith. She currently serves as Assistant Faith Work Director for the National LGBTQ Task Force where her responsibilities included working for the full inclusion of trans and gender non-conforming persons in communities of faith. Barbara was co-founder of GLBT Generations, which was organized to help educate people around the aging needs and concerns of GLBT old people. She was heavily involved in the development of a LGBTQ affordable housing project called Spirit on Lake which opened in Minneapolis in September 2013. In May 2016, Barbara was appointed by President Barack Obama as a member of his Advisory Council for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships, the first transgender to serve on this important Presidential council.

### SATURDAY MORNING FOCUS: “Changing Hearts and Minds in the RCA”



Like most other mainline Christian denominations, the Reformed Church in America has been engaged for several decades in various stages of study, dialogue and debate about homosexuality, same-sex marriage and ordination of LGBTQ persons. Papers have been written, working groups formed, overtures brought forward. Room for All entered the RCA scene in 2005, and has been supporting, educating, and advocating ever since. So where are we now, and what can we do? The conference focus on Saturday morning will begin with a plenary update of the current status of LGBTQ concerns in the RCA, post-General Synod 2017. Participants will select one of four action model workshops that explore ways that the RCA community of LGBTQ people and allies might respond.

### ACTION MODEL WORKSHOPS:

#### 1& 2: “Exploring Identity, Justice, and Healing: Intergroup Dialogue & Restorative Circles”

Dr. Deirdre Johnston and Rev. Jill R. Russell

This dual-focus workshop will introduce participants to the work of Intergroup Dialogue and Restorative Circles. Since both practices are built on similar skill sets and philosophical approaches to the art of communication and listening in the midst of differences or conflict, the workshop will begin together introducing and practicing these skills, after which participants will be invited to choose between the more detailed presentation of Intergroup Dialogue or Restorative Circles.

- **Breakout Option A: Intergroup dialogue** is a process that supports a community in having a sustained conversation over time around *a particular topic*. The conversations are shaped to bring self- and other-identity awareness and communication skills together to productively engage conflict for the sake of understanding. Participants who are interested in creating a dialogue process for their congregations might find Intergroup dialogue as a useful model.
- **Breakout Option B: Restorative circles** are used as a process of dialogue around *a specific conflict* that emerges within a community. The building blocks of a restorative circle are useful in interpersonal communication helping people to respond in the moment to hard conversations. This introduction to Restorative Circles will focus on the building blocks so that participants leave with practical tools that can be useful when engaging in difficult conversations. Participants who are

interested in strengthening their skills for approaching difficult conversations or dealing with conflict as it emerges might find Restorative Circles as a useful model.



**Deirdre Johnston** (she, her, hers) is Professor of Communication at Hope College, Holland, MI. Johnston created the Intergroup Dialogue curricular program at Hope College, and is now co-leading a faculty development program in diversity education and intergroup dialogue. She also provides educational, organizational and corporate trainings in inter-cultural communication, diversity education and intergroup dialogue. Johnston leads study-abroad courses on Peace, Conflict, Justice and Reconciliation in Japan, Northern Ireland, Scotland and South Africa. Her current research is on the Healing of Memories, particularly in post-conflict societies.



**Jill R. Russell** (she, her, hers) has been a congregational pastor for twenty-two years and has served as co-pastor at Hope Church, RCA in Holland, Michigan since 2008. She became interested in Restorative Circles after attending training by Dominic Barter, who developed this process of dialogue in the face of conflict. She is a founding member and the administrator for the Holland Restorative Circles organization that has been supporting the work and training of facilitators in this practice since 2009. She and her partner, Andrew Bunnell, enjoy the adventure of life together including the joy and challenge of parenting their two children, Cassidy and Von.

### **3. “Loving Through Policy: Advocacy and Activism in Church and Public Life”**

**Rev. Stacey Midge**

A powerful way to show tangible love to LGBTQ+ people is through working toward justice in church and government structures. This workshop will address techniques for organizing and strategizing to have maximum impact on denominational and legal policy.



**Stacey Midge** (she, her, hers) is ordained in the RCA and currently serving as pastor of the Mt. Auburn Presbyterian Church of Cincinnati, OH. She was part of the founding board of Room for All, and has been a long-time advocate for LGBTQ+ equality in church and public life. Her activism has also taken her into organizing, direct action, and lobbying for a range of other justice issues, including human trafficking, sex worker rights, housing, food, labor, and reproductive health.

### **4. “Ally: From Noun to Verb, From Label to Action”**

**The Rev. Jonathan Vanderbeck**

A large percentage of Room for All supporters consider themselves as allies to LGBTQ people in the RCA. This workshop will delve into the complexities involved when trying to answer the question, “How can I be an ally?” We’ll unpack what it means to do ally work from an intersectional perspective and explore how issues of race, gender, sexuality, ability status, and the like impact the ways we view our allyhood. Participants will learn about the seven most common mistakes that people involved in ally work make and how to avoid or correct them. Finally, participants will discuss how to move from thinking of the word “ally” as a label to thinking of allyhood as a continuous action. This workshop’s materials are applicable to ally work in general but will be specifically oriented to doing work at the intersection of race and sexual orientation.



**Jonathan Vanderbeck** (he, him, his) is the Community Minister of the First Reformed Church of Schenectady, NY, and Interim Minister of Trinity Reformed Church in Rotterdam. In addition to being a master’s level social worker and trained Intergroup Dialogue (IGD) facilitator, Rev. Vanderbeck was the first openly-gay Korean ordained to the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament in the Reformed Church in America, and is deeply committed to intersectional justice for LGBTQ people-of-color, speaking at national events such as The Reformation Project and the Gay Christian Network conference. He enjoys cooking, good wine, and gets way too excited about church polity.