



come together

2024 LGBTQ
advocacy summit

9 am-5 pm Saturday, October 12
Special Concert Presentation at 7 pm

- 9:00 am** Check in, refreshments
- 9:30 am** Welcome & Opening General Session
- 10:00 am** Break
- 10:15 am** Workshop sessions A I
- 11:15 am** Break
- 11:30 am** General Session II
- 12:15 pm** Lunch provided on site
- 1:15 pm** Workshop sessions B I
- 2:15 pm** Break
- 2:30 pm** Workshop sessions C I
- 3:30 pm** Break
- 3:45 pm** Closing General Session
- 5:15 pm** Dinner provided on site
- 6:30 pm** Doors open to the general public for the concert
- 7:00 pm** Special Concert Presentation: Jennifer Knapp, with opening artist Pepper Kit

A note about the “progressive faith community”

St. Mary’s Episcopal Church has been advocating for LGBT+ equality for over forty years, and our Christian faith is central to our identity and our advocacy. We acknowledge the trauma caused by religious oppression of LGBTQA+ people, and are dedicated to educating ourselves, seeking to offer restitution, and, for those who wish for it, reconciliation with faith communities. We define “progressive faith communities” as those which practice full inclusion for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, and celebrate the diversity of human experience and expression in the name of a loving God. In that spirit, this conference welcomes everyone – people of all faith traditions and none at all – equally, with open hearts and minds, and no hidden purpose or agenda.

Funding for this event has been provided by numerous groups and individuals, including St. Mary’s Episcopal Church, Christians for Equality, Follow the Star United Church of Christ (UCC), and the Caroline Wohlforth Penniman Memorial Fund.

The organizers reserve the right to deny entry to anyone we believe may compromise the safety of our community.

Come Together 2024 Summit

Workshop Presenters and Descriptions

Additional information will be added as presenters are confirmed



Helen Svoboda-Barber, DMin, LCMHCA

Helen (she/her) is a Mental Health Therapist, Leadership Coach, Episcopal Priest, and parent of a beloved transgender young adult.

She is currently partnering with the LGBTQ Center of Durham NC offering a series of workshops, "Keep Calm and Carry On: Election Season Edition." Helen is a USA founding mother of Leading Women and Leading from the Margins, conferences for women, transgender, and 2-Spirit clergy to develop skills and discern calls to executive leadership. She is a thought partner in the development in Durham's The Beloved Community at the Trees, an Episcopal faith community exploring together a life of faith "outside of a Church," and an advisor for Communities of Spiritual Vitality in Vermont and Massachusetts.

Helen is an active member of her Eno Commons cohousing community and enjoys reading cozy mysteries and short hikes in a favorite forest. She can be contacted through her coaching website, www.CardboardDogCoaching.com. Helen will be offering two workshops:

Religious Trauma and The Damage of Purity Culture

There are serious mental health implications for people impacted by purity culture, including but not limited to: feeling ashamed of your body, sexuality or gender identity, feeling controlled or pressured to behave in rigid ways with limiting rules, and a warping of one's worldview that can reduce autonomy and increase shame and stress. Many young- and middle-aged adults are seeking out therapy to repair their broken relationships with sexuality, their partners, their own bodies, and God— because of growing up in Purity Culture. This form of high-control religion can often result in Religious Trauma. Join Helen, a therapist and priest, for a time of learning and discussion about these topics.

Ask Me Anything: Talking with the Mom of a Transgender Young Adult

Helen's children never knew an extended family without queer and trans members. Her oldest was a gender fluid child and came out as trans as an early teen. Helen and her daughter are passionate about helping others understand more about the trans experience. This workshop is geared towards family and loved ones of transgender people, as well as service providers, who may still have questions or want to know more – but need a safe and reliable place to ask and learn.



Mike Garvey

A runner, photographer, and social worker by training, Mike (he/him) comes to Alaska after six years at ACLU National, where he worked on advocacy projects at the federal and state levels. He focused primarily on advancing policy to support community living for people with disabilities, protect pregnant workers, and reduce harm students with disabilities face in schools. He also helped lead a collaborative effort to launch a new version of the ACLU's congressional scorecard. Prior to joining ACLU National, Mike was a graduate assistant in the Clara Bell Duvall Reproductive Freedom Project the ACLU of Pennsylvania. Together with **Rose O'Hara-Jolley**, he will be offering a workshop on **Effecting Policy Change**.



Rose O'Hara Jolley

Rose O'Hara-Jolley (they/them) is the State Director for Planned Parenthood Alliance Advocates, which serves Alaska, Washington, Hawaii, Idaho, Indiana, and Kentucky. In their role, Rose directs all of Planned Parenthood's advocacy in the state, including legislative advocacy, both direct lobbying and grassroots, electoral engagement and endorsed candidate programming, local organizing, and youth leadership development programming. They have lived in Alaska for almost a decade, moving from Ahtna lands (Cantwell) to lower Tanana Dene lands (Fairbanks), they now live on Dena'ina lands (Anchorage). Rose was born at home to quick for the midwife to make it on Seminole and Timucua lands (Gainesville, FL). After college, they moved to Lenape and Canarsie land (Brooklyn) where they were loved, embraced, and challenged by their amazing queer

family in Brooklyn. Rose, as State Director for PPAA, is honored to work alongside both queer ancestors and those currently doing the work to help bring supportive policies and magical queer spaces to Alaska. Rose will be joining **Mike Garvey** in leading the workshop on **Effecting Policy Change**.

Effecting Policy Change 101

In 2023 alone, over 510 anti-LGBT bills were introduced into state legislatures, a three-fold increase over the previous year. These bills sought to limit the ability of trans, non-binary, and intersex people to update gender information on driver's licenses, birth certificates, and other vital documents, putting people at risk of losing jobs, facing harassment, and other harms. According to the New York Times, over 4240 individual book titles were targeted for removal from public libraries in 2023, as censorship efforts reached record levels. Other bills sought to prohibit drag shows, outlaw gender-affirming health care, regulate curriculum in schools, and limit discussions around human sexuality and gender identity. In this workshop, we will review policy related to LGBTQ+ rights, and how to effectively organize, advocate with the legislature, and impact the policy process.



Aaron Scott, M.A.

Aaron (he/him/his) is transgender, a layperson, and 39 years old. He grew up in a tongues-talking United Methodist Church in the foothills of the Adirondack Mountains, where his dad was the pastor. It was a poor congregation in a poor community, deeply divided over the inclusion and dignity of LGBTQ+ people. Aaron remembers thinking to himself, even as a kid, “Why are we so obsessed with gay people? Half this congregation can’t afford heat in the winter whether they’re gay or not.” Lots of early experiences like that shaped Aaron’s sense that issues of justice and dignity are always interconnected—that white supremacy, patriarchy, and queer- and transphobia aren’t about individual meanness but serve to divide and conquer the masses, and hurt people. When we’re constantly at each other’s throats, it’s impossible to look up the food chain and see who’s benefitting from our lack of solidarity. Aaron serves as the national Gender Justice Officer for The Episcopal Church and has been a grass-roots organizer for twenty years, a leader with the Poor People's Campaign, and co-founder of Chaplains on the Harbor. A second-generation preacher and third-generation organizer, he is a trans father and a Christian who grew up in poverty. Scott, who received his MA in Biblical Studies from Union Theological Seminary in 2009, is a contributing author to both *We Cry Justice* and *Jesus Led a Poor People's Campaign*. He is the author of the recently released book, *Bring Back Your People: Ten Ways Regular Folks Can Put a Dent in White Christian Nationalism*. He and his family live in Tacoma, Washington. Scott will be offering two workshops:

Surviving Falling Empires

A session on the parallels between the late Roman Empire’s attacks on sexual diversity and the current attacks on LGBTQ+ people across the U.S., with a focus on the inclusive counter of the Jesus movement then and now.

Countering the Influence of White Christian Nationalism

Discussion on how and why White Christian Nationalism scapegoats people on the basis of gender and sexuality, and how we can out-organize this trend as people of faith.



Merrick Brown, OTR/L, OTD, CSRS, C-NDT

Raised in Alaska, Merrik grew up in the mountains of Eagle River, deeply immersed in Evangelicalism, particularly as a young musician writing worship songs and leading music for a local congregation led by her grandfather. With her dad serving as a youth pastor for the same congregation, Merrik began participating as a pianist and singer for both the youth group and primary congregation in her freshman year of high school. She also led her fundamentalist secondary school's worship team starting in seventh grade.

While attending Wheaton College—an institution rooted in fundamentalism and evangelicalism, with notable alumni like Billy Graham, John Piper, and Rob Bell—Merrick studied piano and embarked on a journey of deconstruction that ultimately led her back to Alaska, and away from the systems and communities in which she was raised.

While most of her professional time is spent as an occupational therapist working with survivors of neurological emergencies, Merrik is passionate about creating space for survivors of Evangelicalism to process shared traumas and foster solidarity. She and her husband live in Anchorage with their two dogs.

Life After Evangelicalism

Wherever deconstruction takes you, processing the experiences of being part of a shame-based religious system is essential for living authentically. Join Merrik for a workshop focused on reclaiming the aspects of self-identity that many of us have been taught to hide, and discovering joy and meaning beyond our foundational faith practices.

GRAMMY-NOMINATED SINGER-SONGWRITER,
AUTHOR, AND LGBTQ+ RIGHTS ADVOCATE

JENNIFER KNAPP



RETURNS TO ANCHORAGE

OCTOBER 12, 2024

"RICH VOCALS...REAL-LIFE SPIRITUALITY"
- SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER

WITH LOCAL OPENING ARTIST

PEPPER KIT

CONCERT @ 7 PM

DOORS OPEN @ 6:30 PM

ST. MARY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH - 2222 E. TUDOR RD.
GET YOUR TICKETS AT [GODSVIEW.ORG](https://godsvie.org)