



Maine Conference, United Church of Christ
Pilgrim Lodge
Dean's Letter



March 16, 2015

Dear LGBT Sisters & Brothers in Faith:

Welcome to Rainbow Camp – a retreat for lesbian, gay, bisexual & transgender Christians to gather as a community of faith and be nourished in God's healing waters at Pilgrim Lodge, a Maine Conference, United Church of Christ summer camp. I am excited and eager to greet you for this sacred time together.

Our camp theme this year is "Living in the Spirit," which will give us the opportunity to reflect on what it means to live a meaningful life with God as LGBT persons of faith. If this is your first time at Pilgrim Lodge – welcome! For those of you who have attended previous camps at PL, then you know the sacredness of this place.

The retreat begins at 7:00 p.m. on Friday, August 21st (please arrive having already eaten dinner) and ends following lunch on Sunday, August 23rd. A finalized copy of our weekend schedule will be sent to you prior to the start of the weekend camp.

Prior to our time together, please review the Pilgrim Lodge Camper Guide, which can be found at: <http://www.pilgrimlodge.org/document/PLParentCamperGuideADULTS.pdf>. Pay close attention to items that you need to bring with you: bedding or a sleeping bag, towels, clothing that can be layered, swimwear, a flashlight (needed for the Saturday evening labyrinth walk), rain gear, bug repellent, and sunscreen (refer to page 5 for a complete list). You might consider bringing a comfortable lawn chair to use for some of our gatherings. Don't forget your Bible as we will have numerous roundtable discussions.

Please let me know if you have any special dietary needs (you may bring your own special food items, which may be left in the kitchen refrigerator). Please let me know if you have any serious food allergies, or have Celiac disease, so I can alert the kitchen staff.

Items not to bring to the retreat include drugs, alcohol, or pets. Please consider leaving your cell phone, laptop, and personal listening devices at home. Please note: Pilgrim Lodge is a tobacco-free facility!

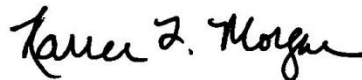
The retreat will be structured around Brian McLaren's book, We Make the Road by Walking. McLaren writes, "... *faith was never intended to be a destination, a status, a holding tank, or a warehouse. Instead, it was to be a road, a path, a way out of old and destructive patterns into new and creative ones. As a road or way, it is always extended into the future. If a spiritual community only points back to where it has been or if it only digs in its heels to where it is now, it is a dead end or parking lot, not a way.*" It is not necessary for you to have read the book in advance of the retreat weekend.

(Continued >>>)

On Saturday evening, we will watch *God & Gays: Bridging the Gap*, a film that takes an intimate look at the struggle of reconciling sexuality and spirituality by looking at the lives of LGBT persons of faith. The film wrestles with the issues of being gay in a right-wing Christian world through the eyes and experiences of people wanting a relationship with the very religion that rejects them. In every age there are groups of people misunderstood and mistreated simply because of who they are. *God & Gays* puts the face and heartbeat of humanity into this emotionally charged issue and answers the question of whether it is possible to be gay and Christian. There will be time for discussion following the movie.

Finally, please be sure to pay any balance owed for the camp prior to your arrival. I look forward to meeting everyone Friday, August 21st at 7:00 p.m. and spending an exciting weekend of renewal with my LGBT sisters and brothers in faith. Please let me know if you need to arrive at a later time. I trust you will leave from our weekend together with a spirit-filled and life-giving understanding of what it means to be an LGBT person of faith in these times. If you have any questions about the retreat, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Darren L. Morgan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev. Darren L. Morgan
Rainbow Camp Dean
dmorgan207@roadrunner.com
207-944-9469