



lovebaldly Annual Report





Mission

LOVEboldly exists to create and develop spaces where LGBTQIA+ people can flourish in Christianity.

Vision

A world where all LGBTQIA+ people can feel safe, belong, and flourish.

Our Team



Dr. Ben Huelskamp
Executive Director



R. D.
Board Chair



Heidi Weaver-Smith
Founder
Board Secretary



Sheri Lytle
Board Treasurer



NV Gay
Director



Siobhan Boyd-Nelson
Director



Mark Wesley
Director

OUR YEAR

Letter from our Executive Director



Dear LOVEboldly Community,

What a year it was! Despite the trials and devastations Ohio's LGBTQIA+ community, particularly the Transgender community, experienced, 2023 was a banner year for LOVEboldly. We continued to bring in larger amounts of donations, educate more people, partner with more congregations and organizations, and have a larger impact on the LGBTQIA+ and faith communities in Ohio and beyond.

In February, we achieved our long-term goal of becoming a majority LGBTQIA+ person-led organization. We continue to work to bring on additional LGBTQIA+ board members to ensure LOVEboldly remains led and directed by LGBTQIA+ Christians with the dedicated support of passionate cisgender and heterosexual allies. I would be remiss not to say that the impetus to becoming an LGBTQIA+ person-led organization arose from and was coordinated by our board members, who are allies. They did the hard work first so that LGBTQIA+ Christians could flourish and, in turn, help other LGBTQIA+ people flourish.

During 2023, we continued our important work of educating ministry leaders and equipping congregations. Through 34 sponsored or co-sponsored programs, LOVEboldly reached almost 1,000 people and impacted even more in one-to-one and small group meetings. We added four new Church Partners and began to develop closer relationships with congregations in Ohio, Tennessee, Alabama, Michigan, Indiana, and Florida. Moving into 2024, a grant from Christ Church Cathedral in Cincinnati will allow us to launch the inaugural cohort of the LOVEboldly Fellows Program for heterosexual and cisgender clergy who are seeking intentional education and coaching on working with the LGBTQIA+ community.

Through a generous grant received at the end of 2022, we were able to engage Rev. Brandan Robertson, a noted pastor, public theologian, and author, as a consultant and communications coordinator. Brandan was able to bring in several "big name" speakers and increase LOVEboldly's profile on social media.

LOVEboldly was increasingly recognized as a voice for Queer Christians and Queer people of faith in general in 2023. We were called upon to lend expertise and our collective lived experience in more spaces, including at the Ohio Statehouse and in the media. We published op-eds, provided testimony before various House and Senate committees, joined multiple organizational letters, and even joined an *amicus curiae* brief filed with the Ohio Supreme Court.

Yet for all our success, the work continues on all fronts. We give thanks to our gracious and empowering God for all the blessings of 2023 and we also thank you, our supporters, donors, volunteers, partners, and community for all that you brought to this movement.

Faithfully,
Dr. Ben Huelskamp

Programming

During 2023, we expanded from webinars only and reintroduced more in-person events, including events cosponsored with Church Partners and other organizations.

34

Programs During
2023

30

Average
attendance at
each program

>1,000

Number of people
who attended all
programs in 2023

LOVEboldly's programs during 2023 included the following events.

Queer Characters and Queer Readings
A 4-Week Zoom Bible Study

March 21, 7pm - Creation
Genesis 1:1-27

March 28, 7pm - Joseph
Genesis 37

April 4, 7pm - David/Jonathan and Ruth/Naomi
1 Samuel 18:1-5 and Ruth 1:1-18

April 11, 7pm - Eunuchs
Matthew 19:11-12 and Acts 8:26-40

For more information and to register, visit
www.loveboldly.net/events

UNLIKELY PARTNERS?
The Church and the Trans Community

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19, 5PM
FREE | OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

What?
A panel discussion with Trans, Christian and the Church and Trans community.
Featuring: NY Gay, Mr. Gay Photography and The 10/10 Project
Pastor Joella Henneman, Church for All People

Where?
Stonewall Columbus
1162 W High St,
Columbus, OH

Will there be a hybrid option?
Yes, please register at
<https://tinyurl.com/1B-April19>

loveboldly www.loveboldly.net

Sexual Ethics for Progressive Christians?
A Conversation with
Jon Carl Lewis and
Dr. Ben Huelskamp

Dr. Ben Huelskamp

Jon Carl Lewis

WE'RE NOT AFRAID ANYMORE

We're Not Afraid Anymore: The History of LGBTQIA+ Inclusion in the American Church

Tuesday, November 14, 7pm,
ONLINE
Free and Open to the Public
Register at
www.loveboldly.net/events

Bravely Exploring Spirituality and Sexuality

Saturday, April 15, 2023
9am to 4pm
First Congregational Church
Columbus, OH

Facilitators
Alejandro Rodriguez
Douglas Argue
Dr. Ben Huelskamp

Co-Sponsored by
The Spirituality Network
LOVEboldly

Executive Director Stats

In addition to formal programs, LOVEboldly's executive director, Dr. Ben, spends a significant amount of time meeting one-to-one with people. Dr. Ben estimates that he spent almost **400 hours** during 2023 meeting with people. That's in addition to all the unscheduled meetings and phone calls which Dr. Ben and the Board respond to throughout the year.

Pride Outreach

LOVEboldly
attended Columbus
and Westerville
Pride in 2023

We interacted with
over 500 people.



Board Member and
Photographer NV
Gay offered free
Pride photos at our
booth.

Graffiti Walls for 2023

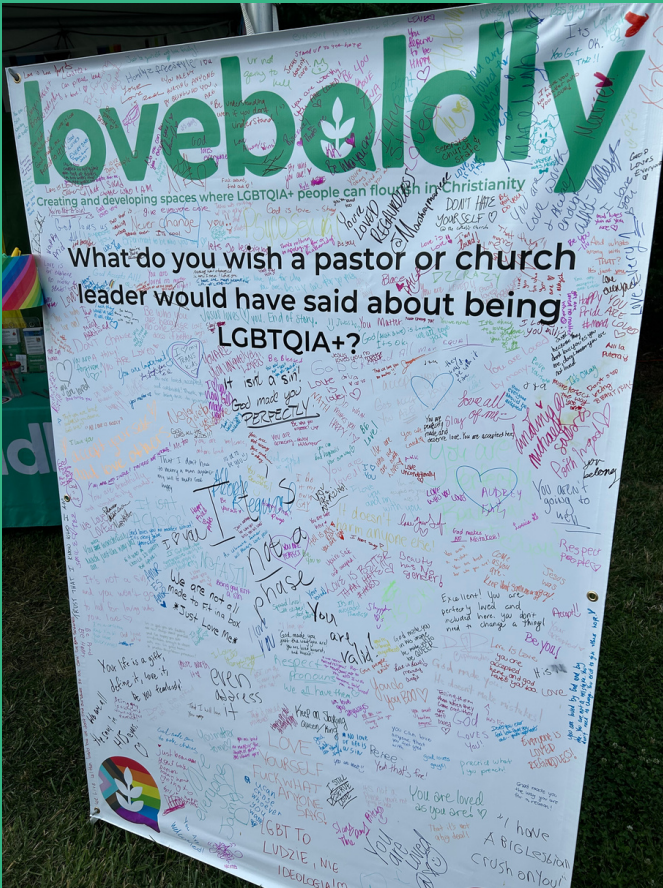
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What do you wish a pastor or church leader would have said about being LGBTQIA+?

What would you write?

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What does a church need to do to truly affirm LGBTQIA+ people?



Share the Love, Share the Pride

New for 2023, the Share the Love, Share the Pride campaign was introduced to recognize our partner organizations in Ohio and lift them up as we raised for LOVEboldly. Any money raised by LOVEboldly on each day, excluding recurring donations, was split 50/50 with that day's organization. The response from our friends and partners was outstanding!

Share the Love, Share the Pride

- June 2 - Church for All People
- June 5 - Legend Community Church
- June 6 - Westerville Community UCC
- June 7 - Linworth UMC
- June 8 - Stonewall Columbus
- June 9 - Equality Ohio
- June 12 - Honesty for Ohio Education
- June 13 - Trans Ohio
- June 14 - Faith in Public Life - Ohio
- June 15 - Trans Allies of Ohio
- June 16 - King Ave UMC
- June 19 - Pilgrim UCC (Cincinnati, OH)
- June 20 - LOVEboldly
- June 21 - LOVEboldly Friends and Allies of LGBTQIA+ People
- June 22: Plexus: LGBT and Allied Chamber of Commerce
- June 23: St. Stephen's Episcopal Church (Columbus, OH)
- June 26: St. Matthew's Episcopal Church (Westerville, OH)
- June 27: The Spirituality Network
- June 28: Pilgrim Congregational UCC (Cleveland, OH)
- June 29 - Trinity Episcopal Church (Columbus, OH)
- June 30 - The Buckeye Flame

Organizing and Advocacy

Op-Eds and Commentary

Executive Director, Dr. Ben Huelskamp, published seven op-eds and commentary pieces with *Red Letter Christians*, *The Buckeye Flame*, and *The Columbus Dispatch*:

“I’m a liberal. You’d be surprised why I’m so happy for transphobic conservatives.” *The Columbus Dispatch*, December 7, 2023.

“The Cleveland Diocese’s Anti-LGBTQ+ Policy is Filled with Judgmental Theology.” *The Buckeye Flame*, September 22, 2023.

“Volunteer chaplains are not trained counselors and should not serve in that role in Ohio’s public schools.” *The Buckeye Flame*, July 25, 2023.

“The Liberatory Nature of Religious Freedom.” *Red Letter Christians*, July 20, 2024.

“Searching for Jesus During Pride Month.” *Red Letter Christians*. June 8, 2023.

“Transgender women are women and transgender men are men.’ It is time allies stand up.” *The Columbus Dispatch*, March 31, 2023.

“People of Faith Must Speak out Against the Chesterland Church Bombing.” *The Buckeye Flame*, March 30, 2023.

Resource to the Media

With the support of our partner organizations, LOVEboldly has become a resource to the local and statewide media. During 2023 we were called on to provide expert opinions to NBC4i (Columbus, OH), WBNS 10TV (Columbus, OH), FOX8 (Cleveland, OH), CBS10 (Columbus, OH), ABC6 (Columbus, OH), *The Cleveland Scene*, *The Buckeye Flame*, *Ideastream Public Media*, and *The Columbus Dispatch*.



Organizing and Advocacy

Testimony

During 2023, LOVEboldly submitted five pieces of testimony on three bills to three Ohio House and Senate committees, in addition to multiple public statements and press releases.

Strategic Partnerships

Having joined and cultivated multiple strategic partnerships during 2022, we continued to strengthen these bonds and explore new opportunities.



Early in 2023, we celebrated the launch of an official partnership with Stonewall Columbus. In addition to Stonewall, LOVEboldly maintains formal or informal partnerships with the organizations below.



Church Partnership Program

In 2022 we launched a formal church partnership, solidifying our relationship with some of our collaborators while continuing to work with others informally. Our Church Partners during 2023 included:

- Westerville Community United Church of Christ
Westerville, OH
- Linworth United Methodist Church
Columbus, OH
- North Broadway United Methodist Church
Columbus, OH
- Legend Community Church
Madisonville, Cincinnati, OH
- United Methodist Church for All People
Columbus, OH
- Short North Church (United Methodist)
Columbus, OH
- St. Stephen Episcopal Church
Columbus, OH



Our Investors

We rely on our grassroots donors and investors for LOVEboldly's primary support. Each year, we are so moved by your generosity, and 2023 was no exception.

\$76,475.66

invested in our work

**146
Donors**

35

**More Donors
in 2023 than
in 2022**

35

**Recurring
Donors**

108%

**Percentage of
our goal raised
in our End-of-
the-Year
Campaign**

A Special Note

The Columbus Natural Wine Festival



LOVEboldly was invited to partner with the 1st Annual Columbus Natural Wine Festival. The festival was a HUGE success and LOVEboldly received a \$1,500 donation and great exposure.

Looking Ahead to 2024

LOVEboldly Fellows Program

With support from a grant from Christ Church Cathedral (Episcopal - Cincinnati, OH), LOVEboldly will launch a nine-month cohort learning experience for cisgender and heterosexual pastors, ministry leaders, and graduate seminarians. The inaugural cohort will launch in March 2024 with ten fellows.

(In)Decent Faith: Conversations on Queerness and Spirituality

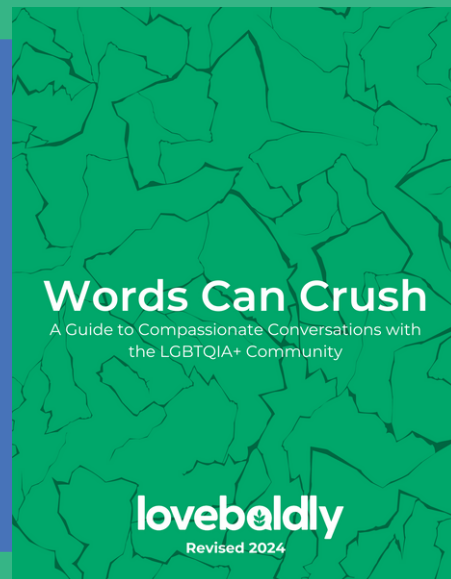
In partnership with Stonewall Columbus, (In)Decent Faith will be a day of conversations, discussions, and community on the LGBTQIA+ community and spirituality with featured speakers from many Queer, religious, and racial backgrounds. Check out our website for more information.



In lieu of a two-day conference, LOVEboldly is experimenting with two one-day events, including “(In)Decent Faith” and a second event in October 2024.

New Content and Resources

During 2024, LOVEboldly will be creating new content and working on new resources. The first resource for release is an updated edition of our classic “Words Can Crush” followed by curriculum for a four week Bible study during Pride month and a 52-week Queer devotional for 2025.



Platinum
Transparency
2024

Candid.

Platinum Level of Nonprofit Transparency

LOVEboldly has been certified, for the third year, by Candid for transparency regarding our financial and governance practices. This is our first year receiving certification at the Platinum level (highest level).

An Invitation

Do you want to connect with LOVEboldly more or find ways to be more involved? Our Executive Director, Dr. Ben Huelskamp (call him Dr. Ben or Ben) LOVES to meet with people in-person, via Zoom, or over the phone. Please reach out to him!

Email: bhuelskamp@loveboldly.net

Calendar: <https://calendly.com/benhuelskamp>



Stay in Touch!

Visit our website for the most up-to-date information on LOVEboldly. Are you signed up for our monthly newsletter? You can sign-up on the website.

www.loveboldly.net