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## **Meet Dr. Ruth Horowitz, Endocrinologist and LGBTQ+ Advocate**

**By Adam Romanik**

Recently, I sat down with Dr. Ruth Horowitz, Endocrinologist and LGBTQ+ Advocate. Dr. Horowitz is the Chief of the Division of Endocrinology at Greater Baltimore Medical Center and serves on the Pride committee to make GBMC a more inclusive and friendly institution for all. Dr. Horowitz is also one of the only endocrinologist's in Maryland who's part of the World Professional Association for Transgender Health.



Dr. Horowitz grew up in a very progressive home; her father worked for the Social Security Administration and her mother was a social worker. During her childhood years, she remembers how her parents instilled in her equity for every person. After high school, she attended Oberlin College, a liberal and progressive school and then earned her medical degree from the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine.

Dr. Horowitz selected endocrinology because it is a more specialized medicine based on individual patient conditions and at many times, in endocrinology it's like solving a complicated problem for each patient. During her time at Oberlin College, Dr. Horowitz was exposed to the LGBTQ+ community. Through her family she first got involved in the trans community and was approached about practicing trans medicine. After some training and conferences, she realized that practicing trans medicine was no different than any other form of medicine.

A few years later, the pride committee at GBMC was holding a celebration for Transgender Day of Remembrance which prompted her to reach out to the committee chair and join the pride committee. As a member of that committee, she has helped to make GBMC more inviting and inclusive. The committee also participates in the local pride festival and parade, holds other celebrations during pride month and national coming out day, and holds trainings and workshops for staff on topics to advance inclusivity.

As we were getting near the end of the interview, I asked Dr. Horowitz, what are the biggest issues that you are currently facing? "Fear", she replied. People in the trans community are worried about getting access to their meds, healthcare and about being safe. They are worried about information in their medical records going to set them up for being harassed, arrested, or deported. Dr. Horowitz reassures them that Maryland is a very trans friendly state and has protections for the community and has seen many patients move from other not so friendly trans states to Maryland because of the support there.

Dr. Horowitz's recommendation for the LGBTQ+ community is support each other and be active in the community. For those that are considering starting the journey of transitioning, she recommends making sure that you have psychological support and work with a mental health provider at the same time starting hormone replacement therapy as well as having some deep conversations with your medical provider to consider things that you may have not thought of previously.

Dr. Horowitz's practices at Bay West Endocrinology Associates PA in Timonium, MD. For more information, visit <https://www.myprivia.com/bayendocrinology>

**HAPPY  HOLIDAYS**

# Home for Christmas

By The Rev. Mark F. Phillips, Minister, First & Franklin Presbyterian Church, Baltimore

Are you going home for Christmas?" That seems to be a big question at this time of year. A few days before Christmas last year, while I was at the grocery store, I heard some version of that question asked repeatedly as I walked through the store. A cashier glanced at a bagger, "So, are you going home for Christmas next week?" Two older couples met up in the dairy section: "Hey, Charlie and Doreen! Are your kids coming home for Christmas?" I was quickly passing by two women who were chatting by the Pop-Tart display and although I had no idea exactly what they were talking about, the two words I did catch as I zipped by were "Christmas" and "home."



Are you going home for Christmas? Home. What is it really that we mean by that word? What do retailers and the postal service want to conjure by the word "home"? Is it a scene from a Norman Rockwell painting, all soft colors, crackling fires on the hearth, wide-eyed children whose eyes sparkle in the light of the Christmas tree? Is that home? Is it the sense of "Home sweet home" counted-cross stitched and framed over the mantle, or Dorothy clicking her heels together three times and saying, "There's no place like home"? Is that home?

I do not know where you're going to be for Christmas this year or what you're expecting when you get there, but I want to suggest to you today that there is in our human hearts a true sense that there is a place where we belong and that somehow we got separated from it a long time ago, and we miss it. As Barbara Brown Taylor puts it so well, "We sense that that place misses us, too," and because we cannot find our way there, the place comes to us, and it turns out not to be a place at all. It turns out to be a person: Emmanuel, the one who came to be with us forever. For me, Christmas is where God—for reasons of love and grace—comes to us, embraces us, and welcomes us unconditionally and gladly, saying, "I'm so happy you're home. My light, love, mercy, and gift of new life are all for you. Just for you."

Several years ago, on the day before Christmas Eve, I delivered a few bags of groceries to a man who had called our church. I'll confess that I felt an uneasiness driving to this section of town alone in the late afternoon. I wondered what I was getting into. I arrived at the dilapidated home and knocked on the door. A young fellow, who looked by the lines on his face, older than his thirty or so years, opened the door. His teeth were spaced unevenly in his mouth, some of them missing in the back, and a jagged scar on his face betrayed some kind

of barroom brawl more than the careful work of a surgeon's repair. It was snowing and was quite cold, so he invited me in off of the front porch. He asked me about our church. He wondered where it was located, and he told me that he attends the twelve-step program that met in our building on Thursday nights. In his front hallway hung a plaque that reminded him of his slogan for living, "Easy Does It." "I pray every day, Reverend," he said. "You know, the Serenity Prayer?" "Yes, I know it," I said, fearing that he was going to ask me to say it with him right there in his dingy front hallway. "God, grant me the serenity to accept..." "Here, I got it on a card," he said, shoving it in my hand. It was tattered and torn. I returned it to him appreciatively and said, "Why don't you keep this for yourself or someone else."

I carried the groceries into his kitchen and helped him somewhat unpack the bags. As I turned to leave, I wished him rather casually, "Merry Christmas." He came right back with, "Oh, no problem there, Reverend; I'm going home for Christmas this year! Gonna be at my mother's house. I haven't been there in seventeen years. So I know I'm going to have a Merry Christmas." And then, as an afterthought, without knowing anything about me, he said, "Hope you get there too." I paused for a second, and there must have been a quizzical look on my face as I said, "Excuse me?" And he answered,

**Continued on Page 6**



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Christmas Eve Service: Dec 24th, prelude at 5 PM, service at 5:30 PM.

## Leather Line - Summer Leather



By Rodney Burger

I discovered the leather community in 1984. I had just moved to Baltimore and was trying to find my way around. It was a different time, when an app was what you had before dinner and grinder was what you used to make coffee. Baltimore had many LGBT bars in those days, but I was having trouble finding them. I had worked as a security guard at a twenty-story condo in Ocean City, Maryland the summer before and I met my first gay couple there. They owned a condo in the building and lived in Baltimore. They said, "If you ever come to Baltimore, call us and we will show you around."

Not having much luck on my own, I did just that. They said they would take me out to dinner followed by an evening of bar hopping. The restaurant they had selected for dinner was in a gay club, but they quickly added that we were only going to eat there and leave. They explain that although the restaurant had amazing Maryland fried chicken, one had to walk through a rather sleazy bar to get to it. It was called The Gallery.

I don't remember what I had for dinner that night, but I will never forget stepping into a smoky room filled with studly men in full leather. We went to many bars that evening, but they were all a blur. I could not wait to return to The Galley. I hadn't learned a new fried chicken recipe; I had discovered the leather community.



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**All Are Welcome**

**Sunday Worship**  
**10:30 a.m.**  
In-person and online

[www.govanspres.org](http://www.govanspres.org)

I was working the nightshift as a prison guard at a downtown jail in those days and lived in the suburbs. There was no locker room, so one had to wear their uniform to work. On Sunday the Gallery was always packed for happy hour. I would come downtown a few hours before my shift and join the fun. I wasn't the only one there with handcuffs.

Although I feared that everyone wondered why I always wore the same tired uniform every week, it helped me fit right in. There was a front bar and a back bar. Above the entrance to the back bar flickered a red neon sign: L / L. It stood for leather / Levi. The back bar had a dress code. If one was not dressed properly the back bartender would politely ask the patron to move to the front. Although I didn't have any leather, uniforms worked just fine. The leather community at that time was very different from today. There were only two kinds of leather: black and wrong. A brown leather vest or jacket would make eyes roll.

Much has changed since those early days. If you attend any leather event today you will see leather in every color. You will also see spandex, rubber, neoprene, fur, and sports gear. The Galley unfortunately is long gone. The building is still there at 1733 Maryland Avenue and is now a restaurant called The Royal Blue. The inside hasn't changed much since the Gallery days and I am happy to report that it is very LGBTQ-friendly. The ShipMates Club is still around too and hosted their kickoff to their annual Daddy Christmas fundraiser event with a cookout on August 31st at Leon's bar. This year's charity will be Clay Pots Community Center. This year's ShipMates' Daddy Christmas will be held on Saturday, December 6th starting at 9 pm at the Baltimore Eagle. Labor Day has come and gone, but you can still wear your summer leather.







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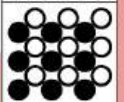
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# Hope In The Middle Of Turmoil

By Janan Broadbent, Ph. D.

We are living in unpredictable, unprecedented and add-any-other-related-adjective times. It does not take much to start down the slippery slope of despair and hopelessness. Like many people I talk with, I find myself up and down, sometimes anxious and depressed because every day brings another atrocity that I never imagined would take place in this country. Other times, I see demonstrations taking place everywhere, even in remote and red states, or I join a group waving signs and flags and then feel the power of community. Let's not forget the power of humor: Reading those columns of humor experts, making fun of what is taking place definitely provides respite and a wider perspective (Try: jefftiedrich@substack.com)



Then there is the media: Some infuriating because there is sane washing on every page. Here and there some with a realistic take telling it like it is (sorry for the cliché). Or thoughtful takes on whatever is going on that day (Dan Rather: steady@substack.com).

What helps in getting through crises, whether personal, professional, or country or world-wide, is connecting with others. As human beings, we need that camaraderie to thrive, especially in a community like LGBTQ+. Being able to share thoughts, feelings, reactions and views strengthen those connections. I recently heard from someone who had cut communications because of health problems and thought the problems would get in the way of the friendship. Well, if acceptance of one another does not include all its foibles, is it a friendship? On the other hand, I can't count how many times I have heard of connections of even family members being broken because of last several years' divisions in political affiliations. I do understand that because that involves a huge difference in values and beliefs, and with that, how could one be real friends anyway?

## Home for Christmas Continued

"Home ... home for Christmas. I hope you get there too. Will you get there?"

Maybe that's the question before all of us - "Will you make it home for Christmas this year?" I hope you will get there too.



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