

Reconciling Sunday 2005



Each year we ask that a special Sunday will be set aside to celebrate your congregation's commitment as part of the Reconciling Ministries Network.

This year we continue in our enthusiasm for full inclusion within our United Methodist Church. We have been sustained through the struggles by the deep understanding of God's grace available to all of us through Jesus Christ. We give thanks for the always present Holy Spirit who goes before us into hard places and who also prepares our hearts for the journey.

Our worship themes for 2005 call upon the energy of the Holy Spirit and also endeavor to move us as disciples into evangelism. We have been assured of our place in God's family through our baptism, now we continue to grow in faith and to act in confidence as we proclaim the Gospel.

We are planning to continue building on these themes of Holy Spirit and evangelism at our convocation next September: **Hearts on Fire!** There we will envision the United Methodist Church truly opening itself to the gifts and graces of the LGBT community. We will see our family face to face and we will commit ourselves to growing God's church.

Each reconciling community - congregation, class, group, or campus ministry - may choose their own day for this special worship. In the past we have recommended the fourth Sunday in January. You may choose this date, January 23, 2004. Some congregations prefer to celebrate on their Reconciling anniversary, during Pride month in June, or another significant time for them.

Whenever you do celebrate, please send your worship bulletin to us. We are lifted by the good works that you do ~ and we hope to find some liturgy resources to share in the 2006 RC Sunday packet!

Yes, We are celebrating Reconciling Sunday! Please send:

Name of Church: _____

Address _____

Date of our Reconciling worship service: _____

Number of brochures: _____ Number of offering envelopes _____

Mail to RMN, 3801 N. Keeler Ave., Chicago, IL 60641
or call the office (773/736-5526)
or email meg@rmnetwork.org

Scripture Selections:

Luke 24:13- 35 The Road to Emmaus.

“Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to one another “Were not ***our hearts burning within us*** while he was talking to us on the road?”

John 14: 15-27 The Promise of the Holy Spirit

Acts 2:1-4 (The Message, Peterson)

When the Feast of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Without warning there was a sound like a strong wind, gale force--no one could tell where it came from. It filled the whole building. Then, ***like a wildfire***, the Holy Spirit spread through their ranks, and they started speaking in a number of different languages as the Spirit prompted them.

Acts 1: 8 But you will receive power when the ***Holy Spirit*** has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

John Wesley “while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my ***heart strangely warmed***. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation.

(John Wesley, On Aldersgate, May 24, 1738)

MUSIC

The Faith We Sing:

#2173 “Shine, Jesus, Shine”
...blaze, Spirit, blaze, set our hearts on fire...

#2236 “Gather Us In”
...fire of love in our flesh and our bone

#2253 “Water, River, Spirit, Grace”

The United Methodist Hymnal:

#439 “We Utter Our Cry”
*...your Spirit on earth, revealing...
...fire with passion your church...*

#336 “Of All the Spirit’s Gifts to Me” (verse 3)

#593 “Here I Am, Lord”
...I, the Lord of wind and flame...

#408 “The Gift of Love”
*...bravest fire...
...be made whole...*

“Creator of Mountains” *...we are building spirit together...*

In ***Singing in Celebration***, 1996, Jane Parker Huber

Calls to Worship

People of God, this day is ours!
¡Pueblo de Dios, este es nuestro día!

**A day to acknowledge our hunger; hunger for love,
Hunger for respect, hunger for justice.**

People of God, this day is ours!
¡Pueblo de Dios, este es nuestro día!

**A day to proclaim that all of God's creation-
Gay, Straight, Bisexual, Transgender-
must be affirmed and made to feel welcome in our communities.**

How deep is your hunger? How long can you wait
in order to be fed the bread which will sustain you?

**Our hunger is deep! ¡Nuestra hambre es profunda!
Yet even as we gather for worship,
we begin to feed one another with the bread of life,
a bread that will not run out even in times of scarcity.
Let us seize the day and make it count.
Let us seize the day and
proclaim the good work that is taking place here and now.**

RCP, Shaping Sanctuary, page 103

Leader: Creating God, blessed are you and blessed is this time and place.
Thank you for these people gathered here.

**People: We are Here! Inside the Doors! We have not retreated!
We are standing in praise!**

Leader: Reconciling Redeemer, you are the mender of our souls and
the healer of our broken bodies.

**People: Bind us together in ways that strengthen and sustain,
nurture and nourish, heal and help ourselves and
the church of Christ.**

Leader: Holy Fire, ignite a new spark in the heart of each one gathered here.

**People: Light our way. Warm our bodies. Inspire our tongues to speak
a new word, to shout another praise and to sing an amazing
Song that will bring to us life and to you glory!**

RCP. Shaping Sanctuary, page 99

A Mighty Wind

"Peter, who are you? Aren't you the one...?"

"No. No, not me."

Denial.

Denial of his Lord, yes , but just as much,
denial of his relationships,
his connectedness,
his "Who am I?"

Fifty days later, the Spirit of God blew through his life
and Peter claimed his truth,
his people,
his life,
and his power.

Pentecostal Empowerment

God calling,
always,
to those who will claim themselves
and speak to an unjust world.

The Spirit coming upon high-tempered, stuttering Moses
to cry, "Let me people go!"

The Spirit upon Miriam
to lead the dance of faith and power.

The Spirit upon Gandhi
to leave English ways for Indian leadership.

The Spirit came upon Joan of Arc and Martin Luther King,
Harriet Tubman and Cesar Chavez,
Bishop Desmond Tutu and Reverend Michael Collins.

The Spirit,
God's Spirit crying out in the wilderness
of oppression,
calling forth those who will know who they are.

Pentecost
The everpresent day
when God's people claim themselves,
receiving the gift of the Spirit
that always blows as a mighty wind
flinging open closed doors
and opening the way
for Justice.

Call to Confession / Prayer of Confession

God of the universe, we bring to you our wonder. God of answers, we bring to you our questions. God of steadfast love, we bring to you our uncertainty. In this time of worship, may we be open to receive what you have to offer us, and find ourselves strengthened by your everlasting presence. Amen.

Leader: Sometimes, God, we have questions.

All: Questions are good.

Leader: Sometimes we are ashamed of our questions,

All: or we laugh at other people's questions.

Leader: or we think we have all the answers,

All: or we think that our answers are the only right answers.

Leader: Sometimes we think that we have life all figured out

And that we don't need you in our lives.

All: Sometimes we shove you out of our lives and we feel alone, and scared, and abandoned.

Leader: Forgive us, God. Heal us. Help us.

All: In life, in death,

Leader: In life beyond death,

All: God is with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Grace UMC Logan Square, Chicago, IL, November 7, 2004

Confession

Forgive us, God, that we have done so little with the gift of life.

Made for the mighty deep, we have frittered away our energy
splashing in the shallows near the shore.

Endowed with minds capable of vast imaginings,
we have become dull and predictable.

Capable of love, we find ourselves with few acquaintances
and still fewer friends.

Blest with soul enough to commune with you, we have been content
to lavish our affections on the passing fancies of the world.

Increase our gratitude for life itself and help us henceforth to live it
more nearly to the full.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Riverside Church, New York City, Shaping Sanctuary, page 112

Prayers

Welcome and Opening Prayer

As a child

I was told and believed
that there was a treasure
buried beneath every window.

I believed it so much that

I have been unsuccessfully
chasing rainbows
most of my life.

I wonder why

no one ever told me
that the rainbow
and the treasure
were both
within me.

Gerald G. Jampolsky, M.D., Trinity UMC, Austin, TX July 2004

Our Table Prayer

Holy Spirit, birth is a beginning and death a destination.

Life is a journey:

from childhood to maturity and youth to age;
from innocence to awareness and ignorance to knowing;
from foolishness to discretion and then, perhaps, to wisdom;
from weakness to strength or strength to weakness – and, often, back again;
from health to sickness and back, we pray, to health again;
from offense to forgiveness;
from loneliness to love;
from joy to gratitude;
from pain to compassion, and grief to understanding;
from fear to faith;
from defeat to defeat to defeat –

until, looking backward or forward, we see that victory lies not at some high place along the way, but in having made the journey, stage by stage, in love with You.

Ahavat Shalom, a gay/lesbian congregation in San Francisco
Open Hands, Spring 1991, Vol. 6 No.4

UM Hymnal 329
UM Hymnal 335

Prayer to the Holy Spirit
An Invitation to the Holy Spirit

Made in God's Image

So then, just talk about "spiritual color" and tell them:

"Whatever color life is, that's the color of God;
whatever color justice is, that's the color of God;
whatever color peace is, that's the color of God;
whatever color freedom is, that's the color of God;
whatever color joy is, that's the color of God;
whatever color healing is, that's the color of God;
whatever color salvation is, that's the color of God;
whatever color power is, that's the color of God;
whatever color truth is, that's the color of God."

So then, regardless of our own skin color or racial identity,

We should strive to be God's (spiritual) color. Amen.

Kenneth Waters, First UMC at Chicago Temple, Chicago, IL February 8, 2004

A LITANY OF UNITY, HYMN #439 "We Utter Our Cry"

With one voice, we utter our cry to you. We unite with all those who engage in prayer and mission with those who suffer.

(Sing together verse 1.)

We unite with all those who confront violence and work for peace in our neighborhoods and our world.

(Sing together verse 2.)

We unite with all those who tend the earth and hold dear all living things.

(Sing together verse 3.)

We unite with all those who support and engage in the process of peace.

(Sing together verse 4.)

We unite with all those whose action testifies to God's victory over evil and who struggle for justice.

(Sing together verse 5.)

Spirit of promise, spirit of unity, renew in all of us the passionate desire for the coming of your kin-dom.

(Sing together verse 6.)

Great Thanksgiving for Communion

Friends, let us gather from wandering,
at the table of friendship and communion with God.

God is with you! **And also with you!**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to God.**

Let us give thanks to our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere
to give you our thanks and praise, O God!

**When we were mad with thirst and cursed your
prophets in the wilderness, you gave us water.
When we railed against you and believed we would
starve, you gave us bread from heaven.**

Now make this bread and cup a sign for us to your continuing
presence within us and among us.

(The bread is broken.)

As you feed us, make us bread for the world.

Make us bread for the world.

(The cup is offered for blessing.)

As you quench our thirst, make us water for the world.

Make us water for the world.

(We are welcomed to the feast.)

*Dumbarton UMC, Washington, DC
Shaping Sanctuary, ed Kelly Turney, 2000, page 225*

Affirmation of Faith

We believe in a sacred power within and around us - a divine spirit that we call by many names and experience in many ways - that empowers and heals - that calls us forth.

We believe in our creativity.

Making and transforming beauty out of words and notes, images, and colors, lines and pictures - and silence.

We believe in doing justice.

Justice that compels and empowers us to risk whatever we must risk to create a climate in which all people can be who they are.

We believe in our dreams.

We experience the world as it is - in both its ugliness and beauty - and we see what it can become.

We believe in making peace.

A peace that is based on openness, honesty, and compassion.

We believe in hope.

We expect changes to continue to occur in our world. We rely on our courage to continue to bring about these changes.

We believe in love.

A passionate love within and around us that laughs and cries, challenges and comforts, a healing love that perseveres.

We believe in potential.

We know who we are - painful as that can be at times - yet we continue to call each other to become more of who we are.

We believe in celebrating.

We remember and we commemorate. We create rituals. We play and dance and sing and love well.

We believe in our diversity.

We affirm our many shapes and sizes, colors and traditions, emotions and thoughts, differences and similarities.

We believe in life.

Life that wells up within and flows out of us like a streaming fountain.

We believe that we are good and holy - a sacred part of all creation.

Susan Karamer, in Shaping Sanctuary, page 90

Juntos creamos espíritu / We're Building the Spirit Together (El Salvador/USA)

Juntos creamos espíritu. Juntos creamos espíritu,
Bailando, llorando, bailando, llorando
Duradero, duradero, duradero.

We're building the spirit together. We're building the spirit together,
with dancing and crying, with dancing and crying,
Never turning, never turning, never turning back ... (snip)

Al Hage, Jorge Flores, Bret Hesla, and Bill Dexheimer Pharris

The entire song is contained in the songbook, *Global Songs/Local Voices*, available for \$10.00, at the website <http://www.bfjmusic.com/products.htm#GSLV>

Spirit of Change

words and music by Tim Lowly

Spi - rit of change Spi - rit of fire
Spi - rit of peace Spi - rit of wind
Spi - rit of breath Spi - rit of birth

Spi - rit of pen - te - cost come burn in our hearts
Spi - rit of pen - te - cost come blow cross this world
Spi - rit of pen - te - cost come bear - ing new life.

Tim Lowly, Berry Memorial UMC, Chicago, IL May 30, 2004

Benedictions

In Christ we experience our wholeness,
we are a new creation.

As you have received God's grace,
go now and dare to reach out to others,

to help others reconcile and make new.

And the presence of God, who is our Creator,
Redeemer, and Sustainer, will go with you.

Kelly Turney, Shaping Sanctuary, page 95

"You are a letter of Christ,
Written not with ink,
but with the *Spirit of the Living God*,

Written not on tablets of stone,
But *on tablets of human hearts.*"

2Corinthians 3:3

and please begin spreading the word for ...

Hearts On Fire!

EIGHTH RECONCILING
CONVOCATION!
LABOR DAY 2005

Expect Exciting Worship, Engaging Bible Study, Challenging Workshops, and Creative Community with many talented leaders including Bishop Minerva Carcaño, Mark Miller, Heather Elkins, Rev. Youtha Hardman-Cromwell, Rev. Dr. Karen Oliveto, Jorge Lockward and more... Mark your calendars and stay tuned for more information!

September 2-5, 2005:
Friday-Monday
Labor Day Weekend
Lake Junaluska, NC

Nestled in the serenity of the Smoky Mountains in Western North Carolina, Lake Junaluska is located in Haywood County, known for the 18 peaks over 6,000 feet, more than any county east of the Mississippi River. The 200-acre lake is surrounded by 1,200 acres of beautiful rolling hills and valleys. Those who have visited have described their "Junaluska Experience" as a renewal of the heart, mind, body, and spirit.