

## Reconciling Sunday 2009

# ***All Means All***

Each year we ask that a special Sunday will be set aside to celebrate your community's commitment as part of the Reconciling Ministries Network. This allows the conversation and hospitality to be refreshed each year. It is helpful to new people of the congregation~ they have the opportunity to hear the story, understand the priority, and share the hope. We seek justice, full inclusion and participation for LGBT people in the Church.

When we spoke to the larger United Methodist Church at the General Conference in 2008, we made the claim that ***All Means All*** ~ that the Church cannot represent the Body of Christ if some of us are left out, silenced, or overlooked. Just as RMN challenged the church to live "All means All," we must challenge ourselves to do the same ~ to let our own "All" mean all.

In 2009, as we observe Reconciling Sunday, we open our hearts and lift our eyes toward a vision that encompasses Every Body, in Every Place and Every Circumstance. Even as we assert and take our place at the table, we will watch for others who are seeking a community that is fully inclusive, authentic in its welcome. We seek the justice of full inclusion of people of all diversities.

We believe that as we seek to love our neighbor our care will go beyond individual relationship and into the creation of justice in community ~ wholeness in the Body of Christ.

And we believe that this radically inclusive justice love is God's joy and will become our joy.

This packet includes worship suggestions: scriptures, prayers, children's messages, hymns, and litanies. Choose and use these or create your own pieces that best challenge and open your congregation.

**January 25<sup>th</sup>:** Our tradition is to recommend the fourth Sunday in January, but you may choose differently. Some congregations celebrate on their Reconciling anniversary, during Pride month in June, or another significant time for them.

### **Also enclosed:**

**Bulletin insert ~ 1/2 sheet**

**Form to order special offering envelopes or you may phone the office 773-736-5526**

**Two pages of the new language of the 2008 Book of Discipline, and Book of Resolutions**

**Readers' Theater : Those Whom God Has Joined Together**

**An introduction to our Called to Witness 2 campaign**

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**Also, this packet is posted on our website. You may gather it electronically to reproduce.**

<http://www.rmnetwork.org/prayers.asp>



## Suggested Scripture Readings

**Micah 6:8** And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?

**John 13:34- 35** By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

**John 15: 15-17** I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called your friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from our God. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that God will give you whatever you ask in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

**Matthew 22:36-39** A lawyer asked, "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"

**Matthew 25: 35-40** I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me... Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.

**Psalms 146: 5-10** Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God, Who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them; who keeps faith forever; Who executes justice for the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry...

**Psalms 89:14 – 18** Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; Steadfast love and faithfulness go before you. Happy are the people who know the festal shout, who walk in the light of your countenance....

## Calls to Worship

**Psalm 100, Psalter, United Methodist Hymnal 821**

**A litany from Psalm 89** (verses: 1, 14-18, 52)

I will sing of your steadfast love, O God, forever;

**I proclaim your unending care for all peoples.**

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne;

**Steadfast love and faithfulness go before you.**

Happy are the people who know the songs of your feast,

**Who walk in the light of your face;**

they rejoice in your name all day long,

**And honor your righteousness.**

For you are the glory of our strength;

**by your favor our leaders are exalted.**

For our protection belongs to God,

**our leader to the Holy One of Israel**

Blessed be you, O God, forever,

**Amen and Amen.**

## Prayers

Prayer, For Courage to do Justice (United Methodist Hymnal 456)

### Prayers of the people to an abundant God, based upon Isaiah 55

One: God of wine and milk,

Who promises sweet water to the thirsty,

Who invites us to eat what is good and delight in rich foods,

**All: Teach us to remember that your gifts are given for sharing, not hoarding  
And feed all who are in need.**

One: God of the everlasting covenant of steadfast love,

Who made a boy into the leader and witness to all people,

Who has cared for us, and taught us good things,

**All: Remind us to listen to languages other than our own,  
and empower us to hear those who have been silenced by oppression and fear.**

One: God of abundant pardon,

Who draws near to us that we might know you,

Who invites repentance that we might please you,

**All: Enable us to forgive and restore as you have reconciled all to yourself;  
Help us to acknowledge when we sin and apologize when we hurt others.**

One: Word of life,

Like the rain which waters the fields to bring forth seeds and bread,

You go into the earth and bring forth life and justice,

**All: Accomplish in us your loving purpose;  
Multiply our offerings of kindness into compassion for all people.**

One: Make our community an everlasting testament to your love.

**All: Be generous with your justice, O, God  
That the hungry may eat, the tired may rest,  
and the stranger may claim his(her) place in the family.**

One: Send us forth in joy and peace

**All: We join the mountains and hills in singing your praise  
We know you will bring forth good things upon all the earth.  
Amen.**

One: Amen.

(by Audrey Krumbach, with permission to adapt.)

## Prayer of Confession

All: God of perfect justice,

Left: We confess our everyday failures to care for your family.

Right: We have failed to love your people.

Left: We did not give food to the hungry or water to the thirsty, but hoarded our wealth in fear.

Right: Although you made our hands for building, we labored after wealth and empty things.

Left: We did not welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, or visit any prisoners;  
instead, we busied ourselves and pretended not to see.

All: We are sorry and we humbly repent.

Heal our eyes to see that you love the ones we have rejected.

Heal our hands that we might reach out in love rather than grasping at vain and empty things.

Heal our hearts and replace our fears with the courage to love all of your people in our hearts and  
minds, words and actions.

Amen.

*Time of silence, then the leader:*

Leader: God, the generous creator, offers us grace beyond measure.

Jesus, the perfect one, ended the power of evil.

The Holy Spirit, powerful and kind, empowers each one to live in perfect love.

Peace be with you.

All: Peace be with you.

*Confession from Matthew 25 (31-46) by Audrey Krumbach with permission to adapt*

## Affirmation of Faith

I believe it is a matter of faith to stand up for those who cannot stand up for themselves.

I believe it is a matter of faith to recognize equally and love all members of God's human family. There are no exceptions to God's love.

I believe God's creation is good, beautiful and sacred; therefore to condemn any portion of God's creation is to condemn a portion of God. This is sin.

I believe Jesus Christ came to us to free all people from sin and to make disciples – people willing to live Christ's discipline of love and justice for all.

I believe the Holy Spirit is that power within us that gives us courage and stamina to face the truth and to live it, even to die for it, as Jesus died.

I believe in the resurrection, the victory over death, and the truth that is life for all in Jesus' name.

Glory to God, the One in Three: Creator, Savior, and Holy Power of love.

Amen.

*Shaping Sanctuary, page 91, adapted from Ruth Duck and Maren Tirabassi*

## Suggested Hymns

### United Methodist Hymnal

111 How Can We Name a Love  
577 God of Grace and God of Glory  
581 Lord, Whose Love through Humble Service

### The Faith We Sing

2172 We are called (Micah 6:8)  
2223 They'll Know We are Christians  
by Our Love (John 13: 34-35)

### Shaping Sanctuary

358 Ours the Journey, an RMN Anthem  
322 Walls Mark Our Boundaries  
276 All Are Welcome

**Also in Shaping Sanctuary, page 271, with tune El Camino, (“Cuando El Pobre”):**

### **For the Goodness of our Bodies** by Ruth Duck

For the goodness of our bodies made for caring, for the longing of two hearts learning to love,  
for the Joy that lovers find in one another,  
for these good gifts we would thank you, loving God, for these good gifts we would thank you, loving God.

For the vows a man and woman honor daily, for the pledge two women keep with all their hearts,  
for the commitments two men keep with one another,  
for these good gifts we would thank you, loving God, for these good gifts we would thank you, loving God.

For the courage that burns bright in seeking justice, for compassion to show love where there is fear,  
for the rainbow, sign of promise for your future,  
for these good gifts we would thank you, loving God, for these good gifts we would thank you, loving God.

See Also [Welcome God's Tomorrow: 38 Hymn Texts](#) by Ruth Duck.  
(This would complement the Readers' Theater script!)

### For Everyone Born, lyrics by Shirley Erena Murray

For everyone born, a place at the table, for everyone born, clean water and bread;  
a shelter, a space, a safe place for growing, for everyone born, a star overhead.

Refrain: And God will delight when we are creators of justice and joy, compassion and peace:  
yes, God will delight when we are creators of justice, justice and joy.

Find the music and all the verses in *For Everyone Born: Global Songs for an Emerging Church*.  
Edited by: Jorge A Lockward & Christopher Heckert, Publisher: General Board of Global Ministries, 2008  
To order: [www.cokesbury.com](http://www.cokesbury.com)

## Children's Time

Jesus said to him,

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.  
And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" Matthew 22:36-39

You may use the acronym "JOY" to teach the lesson of Matthew above.

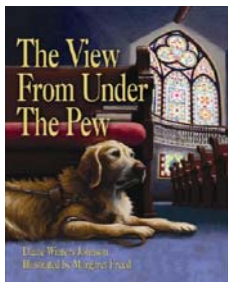
**J = Jesus**  
**O = Others**  
**Y = Yourself**

You may say, "You know the song, "Jesus loves Me?" Sing it once. It is good to feel loved by Jesus.

Ask the children, "Who are we to love?" The answers are God, neighbor and ourselves.  
As we practice loving others, we are actually showing our love for God and Jesus.  
What are some things we might do to show our love for others?

When we love our neighbor, we also want what is fair for them. Did you ever say, "That's not fair!" ?  
We want the games we play to be fair, not just for ourselves, but for everybody.  
We will try to treat one another to be fair when we play or when we work.

And we can love ourselves. When we do, we are able to be generous and share love with others.  
When we are having a good day, able to share, to smile, to grow in God's ways, it brings **JOY**.



### ***The View from Under the Pew***

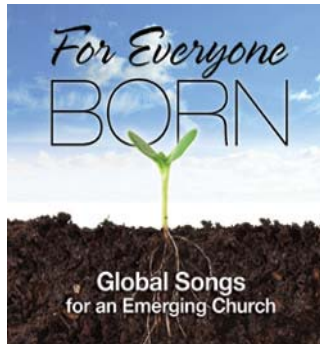
By Diane Winters Johnson

Abingdon Press, 2008

"Walter is a beautiful blond golden retriever who was born for a very special purpose. He works as a Seeing Eye ® dog with Pastor Diane. Pastor Diane has difficulty seeing, and Walter's job is to guide her through the day so she can do her work of caring for the church."

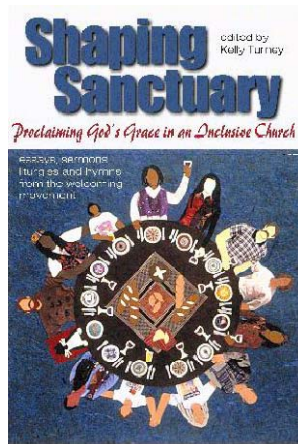
This story will teach children about people who cannot see and have interesting ways that they manage everyday work, play, and church. It can increase their awareness of others and ability to be welcoming of all people.

## Resource Idea Books



***For Everyone Born:  
Global Songs for an Emerging Church.***

Edited by: Jorge A Lockward & Christopher Heckert  
Publisher: General Board of Global Ministries, 2008  
To order: [www.cokesbury.com](http://www.cokesbury.com)



***Shaping Sanctuary: Proclaiming God's Grace  
in an Inclusive Church***

edited by Kelly Turney  
Soft-cover, over 300 pages with six-to-eight week study guide, index and resource lists.  
Artwork by Jan Richardson  
Cost: \$14.00 plus \$5 shipping.

*Shaping Sanctuary: Proclaiming God's Grace in an Inclusive Church* provides inclusive worship materials (essays, liturgies, hymns, new words to familiar hymn tunes and a study guide) that value the diversity of sexuality and embody incarnation.

The book has also been said to be a gift to the church, but for the church to truly benefit from the gift, we must make use of this resource and distribute to the broadest possible audience.

To order: <http://www.rmnetwork.org/store.asp>

Or contact the RMN office. RMN, 3801 N. Keeler Avenue, Chicago, IL 60641 (773)736-5526

***A Place in God's Heart... A Place at Christ's Table***

**Worship Resources for the Welcoming Church Movement, 2007**

**David Lohman, editor**

Unless otherwise noted, permission is granted to reprint individual selections for congregational use. Download this resource at [www.WelcomingResources.org](http://www.WelcomingResources.org)



## **A Few Books to Consider as we seek to welcome ALL people.**

### **The Family Bible** *a children's story Bible*

by Ralph Milton, Westminster John Knox Press, 1996, seventh printing

"I believe, with a fire-in-the-belly passion, that the Bible contains God's call to humanity to live into the future with courage and caring, with joy and justice, with freedom and opportunity for all creation." The author, page 7

**Dear Sisters: A Womanist Practice of Hospitality** by N. Lynne Westfield, Pilgrim Press, 2001

### **Everything you never wanted Your Kids to Know About Sex** (but were afraid they'd ask):

The secret to surviving your Child's Sexual Development from Birth to the Teens  
by Justin Richardson MD, Mark A. Schuster, MD, PhD, Three Rivers Press, 2003  
Highlight: Chapter 5: Think About It: considering your child's sexual orientation

### **The Disabled God: Toward a Liberatory Theology of Disability**

by Nancy L. Eisland, foreword by Rebecca Chopp, Abingdon Press, 1994.

The biblical support of virtuous suffering has been a subtle, but particularly dangerous theology for persons with disabilities. Used to promote adjustment to unjust social situations

### **The View from Under the Pew** by Diane Winters Johnson, Illustrations by Margaret Freed.

Walter is a beautiful blond golden retriever who was born for a very special purpose.

He works as a Seeing Eye ® dog with Pastor Diane. Pastor Diane has difficulty seeing, and Walter's job is to guide her through the day so she can do her work of caring for the church.

### **Tribal Church: Ministering to the Missing Generation**

by Carol Howard Merritt, Alban Institute, 2007 Welcoming people under age 40.

### **Dios Nos Ama Por Igual:** Una invitacion al dialogo sobre la orientacion sexual.

Un recurso para el dialogo sobre el temade la orientacion sexual. Hay que encender una chispa de entendimientopara ayudar a familias y comunidades a crecer y a vivir juntos - reclamando nuestra fe profunda de que Dios nos ama, a cada uno por igual.

Finally, a warm and gracious Spanish-language publication that breaks the silence about sexual orientation. For families, churches, schools, health care providers, and more, Dios nos ama por igual removes barriers and invites loving dialogue. **Author:** Ann Thompson Cook

**Bulk Orders:** 10+ at \$4.50ea. from RMN.

## ***And Coming in 2009... we are very excited to announce:***

### **All God's Children: teaching children about sexual orientation and gender identity By Melany Burrill, 20 page booklet will be available from RMN**

Sample chapter titles:  
When children ask

All God's Children are Precious  
Children of God – created in God's image



## **Book of Discipline 2008: Notes of Hope after General Conference**

### **¶161.a The Family (80959-C2-¶161.A and C278-¶161.A-A)**

*<http://calms.umc.org/2008/Text.aspx?mode=Majority&Number=800>*

*The Family*-We believe the family to be the basic human community through which persons are nurtured and sustained in mutual love, responsibility, respect, and fidelity. We affirm the importance of **loving parents** for all children. We also understand the family as encompassing a wider range of options than that of the two-generational unit of parents and children (the nuclear family). We affirm shared responsibility for parenting where there are **two parents** and encourage social, economic, and religious efforts to maintain and strengthen relationships within families in order that every member may be assisted toward complete personhood.

### **¶161.g Human Sexuality (80449-C2-¶161.G)**

*<http://calms.umc.org/2008/Text.aspx?mode=Minority&Number=1186>*

We affirm that sexuality is God's good gift to all persons. We call everyone to, responsible stewardship of this sacred gift. Although all persons are sexual beings whether or not they are married, sexual relations are affirmed only within the covenant of monogamous, heterosexual marriage. We deplore all forms of the commercialization, abuse, and exploitation of sex. We call for strict global enforcement of laws prohibiting the sexual exploitation of children and for adequate protection, guidance, and counseling for abused children. All persons, regardless of age, gender, marital status, or sexual orientation, are entitled to have their human and civil rights ensured and to be protected against violence. The Church should support the family in providing age-appropriate education regarding sexuality to children, youth and adults.

We affirm that all persons are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God. All need the ministry of the church in our struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship that enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self. The United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Christian teaching. We affirm that God's grace is available to all. **We will live together in Christian community, welcoming, forgiving, and loving one another, as Christ has loved and accepted us. We implore families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends. We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons.**

### **¶161.19 Funding Ban**

*<http://calms.umc.org/2008/Text.aspx?mode=Majority&Number=1226>*

To ensure that no annual conference board, agency, committee, commission, or council shall give United Methodist funds to any gay caucus or group, or otherwise use such funds to promote the acceptance of **homosexuality or violate the express commitment of the UMC "not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends."** (¶161.G). The council shall have the right to stop such expenditures. This restriction shall not limit the Church's ministry in response to the HIV epidemic, nor shall it preclude funding for dialogs or educational events where the Church's official position is fairly and equally represented.

## **Book of Resolutions 2008**

### **Opposition to Homophobia and Heterosexism (80845-C2-R9999)**

Add a new resolution as follows:

WHEREAS, homophobia<sup>1</sup> is the discrimination of people perceived to be non-heterosexual, regardless of the victim's actual sexual orientation or sexual identity; and,

WHEREAS, heterosexism<sup>2</sup> is a self-justifying system of homophobia that

- 1) Perpetuates stereotypical categories of what is essentially "masculine" and what is essentially "feminine,"
- 2) Provides a privileged status for people who identify as culturally defined heterosexuals, and
- 3) Discriminates against persons who, regardless of their sexual orientation or sexual identity, do not appear to fit within the particular category defined as appropriate for their gender; and,

WHEREAS, actions rooted in homophobia and heterosexism, including violence, threats, ridicule, humiliation, discrimination, isolation, and rejection, is damaging to persons of all sexual orientations and identities,

WHEREAS, homophobia and heterosexism are manifestations of sexism in general in that they foster stereotypes based on arbitrary distinctions of gender categories,

WHEREAS, the United Methodist Church is committed to the eradication of sexism (#48, 2004 Book of Resolutions),

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the United Methodist Church strengthen its advocacy of the eradication of sexism by opposing all forms of violence or discrimination based on gender, gender identity, sexual practice or sexual orientation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the General Board of Church and Society develop resources and materials aimed at educating members of the local churches about the reality, issues, and effects of homophobia<sup>1</sup> and heterosexism<sup>2</sup> and the need for Christian witness against these facets of marginalization.

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<sup>1</sup> Homophobia, A commonly used definition from the American Heritage Dictionary (1992): "Fear or contempt for lesbians and gay men."

<sup>2</sup> Heterosexism, A commonly used definition from the American Heritage Dictionary (1992): "Discrimination or prejudice against lesbians or gay men by heterosexual people."