

2010 Reconciling Sunday Worship Service

Entrance

Gathering Music / Prelude

Greeting

Call to worship

From Psalm 118

This is the day that the Lord has made

Let us rejoice and be glad in it

With all of creation we declare

**We are stone that the builders rejected,
We are God's beloved cornerstone.**

With God beside us, we need not fear.

When in distress, we call on the Holy One;

You will carry us to a safe place.

With all of God's creation everywhere, we proclaim,

Your love endures forever.

Come and give thanks to the One who is good and true.

Your love endures forever.

Our God is Good and has given us light

We give thanks for You who gives us light, and life, and love.

Opening Prayer

Member of Church

Opening Hymn

As a Fire Is Meant for Burning

TFWS 2237

Proclamation and Response

Scripture

Isaiah 52:7

1 John 3:17-18

Children's Time

Comment [AK1]: All service-preparation and leadership recommendations from the RMN liturgical team are in this comment format. Please read all comments as *recommendations* and not requirements. We offer this to you as a resource, not a prescription.

Comment [AK2]: Distribute RUM envelopes here (if you did not place them in the order-of-service/bulletins) and explain here that members of Reconciling Congregations need to sign up individually to be RUMs and encourage them to fill out the RUM envelope to be collected during the offering time.
*Request RUM cards (sent to you at no cost) from the RMN Office by phone or email.

Comment [AK3]: Here, and throughout this service, the liturgical text in **Bold** are intended to be congregational responses.

Comment [AK4]: Have a lay leader or someone from your Reconciling committee share an opening prayer appropriate for your local congregation.

Comment [AK5]: See included sheet: "Children's Time: God's Messengers" based on Isaiah 56:7.

Hymn of Preparation

Guide My Feet

TFWS 2208

Gospel Reading

Matthew 5: 14-16

Sermon

A Reconciling Creed (Adapted from “A New Creed of the United Church of Canada

We are not alone, we live in God's world.

We believe in God:

who has created and is creating, who has come in Jesus,
the Word made flesh, to reconcile and make new,
who works in us and others by the Spirit.

We trust in God who sustains all of creation.

God, the Holy Spirit transcends all human categories,
embraces all loving orientations: gay, straight, lesbian and bisexual;
and celebrates all gender identities: traditional, transgender, and nonconforming.

In love, God brings us together with others into perfect reconciliation by grace.

We are called to be the Church:

to celebrate God's presence, to live with respect in Creation,
to love and serve others, to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope.

In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us.

We are not alone.

Thanks be to God.

Offering #1

Hymn of Response

Sois la Semilla (You are the seed)

UM583

Believe Out Loud Minute

Offering #2

Comment [AK6]: This is the time for a general church (normal) offering, if you will collect a second offering for RMN.

If you prefer to collect only once, omit this offering.

Comment [AK7]: Have a prepared volunteer, active reconciling person or a trained called-to-witness or Believe Out Loud Campaign Participant tell their two minute story (see How to: Share a Believe Out Loud Story)

Comment [AK8]: Collect RUM cards and special offering at this time.

Thanksgiving and Communion

Invitation to the Table

This is God's table, it does not belong to this church or denomination

This is God's table.

ALL are invited here,

who seek to love God and know Jesus Christ.

God celebrates all races, ages, ethnicities,

abilities, classes, loving orientations and gender identities

This is no place for hate.

All are welcome who come seeking hope, healing, and life in Jesus Christ.

Passing the Peace

Though we were a people plagued by fear, sin and brokenness,

God came among us, proclaiming love

and reconciling us to one another and God's self.

God saw us as we truly are, loved us and declared that we are blessed children.

As forgiven and reconciled people, let us share signs of peace with one another.

Peace be with you

...**And also with you**

The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord 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 thanks to you,

Creator of heaven and earth.
You formed us in your image
And breathed into us the breath and love of life.
But we turned away, rejecting your love and one another in fear and hate.
Yet your love remained steadfast.
You delivered us from the captivity of alienation and despair
Brought us into covenant and spoke to us through your prophets.
Moving us into places of love and reconciliation
And so,
with your people on earth
and all the company of heaven
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:
**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**
Holy are you, and blessed is your child Jesus Christ.
By the baptism of suffering, death and resurrection
you gave birth to your church,
delivered us from slavery to sin and death,
and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.
By this covenant,
you anointed Jesus Christ to bring good news to the poor,
to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
and proclaim the year of jubilee.
On the night in which Jesus gave himself up for us
he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread,
gave it to the disciples, and said:

"Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.

Do this in remembrance of me."

When the supper was over, Jesus took the cup,
gave thanks to you, gave it to the disciples, and said:

"Drink from this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
poured out for you and for many
for the forgiveness of sins.

Do this as often as you drink it,
in remembrance of me."

And so,

in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,
we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving

as a holy and living sacrifice,
in union with Christ's offering for us,

as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here,
and on these gifts of bread and wine.

Make them to be for us the body and blood of Christ,
that we may be for the world the body of Christ,
redeemed by your grace.

By your Spirit reconcile us to one another,

That we may know your perfect love in each of us;
gay, and straight, bisexual, transgender, lesbian and questioning

Help us to celebrate all that you have made us to be;

Help us to believe your words of love out loud to all the world

Until Christ comes in final victory and
we see in creation the perfection of your hope.

Through your heir, Jesus Christ,

With the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church
All honor and glory to you, our Creator,
Now and forever.

Amen.

Amen

And now with the confidence of the beloved children of God, let us pray,

The Lord's Prayer

Breaking the Bread

Communion (Serving the Bread and Cup)

The Food of Heaven given for you |
The Cup of God's Covenant given for you

Comment [AK9]: Words for the distribution of the bread and juice.

Sending Forth

Hymn

This Little Light of Mine

UMH 585

Benediction

You are the light of the world.
You are a city on a hill.
You cannot be hidden.
Let your light shine before others,
so that all may see the goodness of God
and give glory to our Creator!

Believe OUTLOUD

It is not enough to think that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons should be included in all United Methodist churches, we must sing their welcome as loudly as we sing hymns. Telling your story can inspire hearts and minds to transform the world. Learn how to tell your story, organize a team, and plan a house party at a 2010 *Called to Witness: Believe Out Loud* training. Visit www.rmnetwork.org for information about trainings in your area.

As a **BELIEVE OUT LOUD DISCIPLE**, I work for full inclusion of all persons in The United Methodist Church. This year, I will:

Commit:

to the Movement for full inclusion by signing this card and returning it to the Reconciling Ministries Network.

Share:

my personal Reconciling Story with two people who may not yet know that I support full inclusion.

Pledge:

\$10 a month to the movement; pledges can be set up by calling RMN at 773-736-5526 or visiting www.rmnetwork.org/donate.asp

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City, State, ZIP _____

Phone(s) _____

Email _____

Church _____

Demographic Information:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Laity | <input type="checkbox"/> Person of Color |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clergy | <input type="checkbox"/> Transgender |
| <input type="checkbox"/> LGBQ | <input type="checkbox"/> Family of LGBT Person |

Send to: **Reconciling Ministries Network**
3801 N Keeler Ave ■ Chicago, IL 60641
P:(773) 736-5526 ■ www.rmnetwork.org



68%
of United Methodist clergy believe homosexual persons should be fully welcome without qualification.

Yet...

7%
spoke out publically in favor of welcome and affirmation!

68%
of United Methodist clergy believe
homosexual persons should be fully
welcome without qualification.

Yet...

7%
spoke out publically in favor
of welcome and affirmation!

Believe OUTLOUD

It is not enough to think that lesbi-
an, gay, bisexual, and transgen-
der persons should be included
in all United Methodist churches,
we must sing their welcome as
loudly as we sing hymns. Telling
your story can inspire hearts and
minds to transform the world. Learn how to tell your story, organize a team,
and plan a house party at a 2010 *Called to Witness: Believe Out Loud* training.
Visit www.rmnetwork.org for information about trainings in your area.

As a BELIEVE OUT LOUD DISCIPLE, I work for full inclusion of
all persons in The United Methodist Church. This year, I will:

Commit:

to the Movement for full inclusion by signing this card
and returning it to the Reconciling Ministries Network.

Share:

my personal Reconciling Story with two people who
may not yet know that I support full inclusion.

Pledge:

\$10 a month to the movement; pledges can be set up by calling
RMN at 773-736-5526 or visiting www.rmnetwork.org/donate.asp

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City, State, ZIP _____

Phone(s) _____

Email _____

Church _____

Demographic Information:

- Laity
- Clergy
- LGBTQ
- Person of Color
- Transgender
- Family of LGBT Person

Send to: **Reconciling Ministries Network**
3801 N Keeler Ave ■ Chicago, IL 60641
P:(773) 736-5526 ■ www.rmnetwork.org



2010 Reconciling Sunday Worship Service

Entrance

Gathering Music / Prelude

Greeting

Call to worship From Psalm 118

This is the day that God has made

Let us rejoice and be glad in it

With all of creation we declare

We are stone that the builders rejected,

We are God's beloved cornerstone.

With God beside us, we need not fear.

When in distress, we call on the Holy One;

You will carry us to a safe place.

With all of God's creation everywhere, we proclaim,

Your love endures forever.

Come and give thanks to the One who is good and true.

Your love endures forever.

Our God is Good and has given us light

We give thanks for You who gives us light, life, and love.

Opening Prayer

Member of Church

Opening Hymn

As a Fire Is Meant for Burning

TFWS 2237

Many Gifts, One Spirit

UMH 114

Proclamation and Response

Scripture

Isaiah 52:7

1 John 3:17-18

Children's Time

Hymn of Preparation

Guide My Feet

TFWS 2208

Open My Eyes, That I May See

UMH 454

Gospel Reading

Matthew 5: 14-16

Sermon

A Reconciling Creed

(Adapted from “A Statement of Faith of The United Church of Canada” UMH #883)

We are not alone, we live in God's world.

We believe in God:

who has created and is creating, who has come in Jesus,
the Word made flesh, to reconcile and make new,
who works in us and others by the Spirit.

We trust in God who sustains all of creation.

God, the Holy Spirit transcends all human categories,
embraces all loving orientations: gay, straight, lesbian and bisexual;
and celebrates all gender identities: traditional, transgender, and nonconforming.

In love, God brings us together with others into perfect reconciliation by grace.

We are called to be the Church:

to celebrate God's presence, to live with respect in creation,
to love and serve others, to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope.

In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us.

We are not alone.

Thanks be to God.

Offering #1

Hymn of Response *Sois la Semilla (You are the seed)*

UMH583

Reconciling Miracle Minute

Offering #2

Thanksgiving and Communion

Invitation to the Table

Passing the Peace

The Great Thanksgiving

Congregational Responses in UMH Page 13-15

The Lord's Prayer

Breaking the Bread and Communion (Serving the Bread and Cup)

Sending Forth

Hymn

This Little Light of Mine

UMH 585

Benediction

How to: Children's Time

"God Has Many Messengers"

Age Range:

This exercise will work best with children 4-12 years old.

Scripture:

Isaiah 52:7

How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of the messenger who announces peace,
who brings good news,
who announces salvation,
who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns.'

Items needed:

Several different types of shoes, enough for each child to have at least one shoe
(e.g. snow boots, slippers, sneakers, dance shoes, pumps, clogs, loafers, swim flippers, etc.)

Learning Objectives:

God needs many different kinds of people to do all the things God hopes will happen

Plan:

- Have each child pick a shoe, look at it, and describe its purpose
- Encourage the kids to imagine and describe what happens when people wear the wrong shoes for activities; e.g. Playing soccer in heels, dancing in swim flippers, swimming in snow boots.
- Point out that just like many of us have several pairs of shoes to do different things, we need lots of different people to do all the different things that God hopes we will do in the world.
- Encourage the children to think about the many jobs that put the church together (musicians, preacher, sweeper, cleaner, Sunday school teachers, coffee makers etc.)
- Remind them that, like each pair of shoes: Every job needs to happen, we each have a job, and all jobs are important
- Ask them what they are good at, and what they can do for the church (e.g. sing, smile, help clean, etc.)

Pray to close

How to: Reconciling Miracle Minute

Introduction:

A Reconciling Miracle Minute is a personal story told in two minutes or less that expresses the importance of full inclusion for persons of all sexual orientations and gender identities in The United Methodist Church. Our stories can inspire action, express our hopes or pains, convey a sense of urgency for action today, and might openly welcome a lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) person *to church for the first time ever*.

Everyone has a story; was there a moment when you changed your mind, made a decision, or realized the importance of full inclusion? As you prepare your story, think about what relationships, events and people motivated your work for full inclusion. Your miracle minute story might describe the first time you felt truly included in a church, you saw a church fail to include someone, or when you realized how much God loves every single person. You might remember the time when you or a family member came out, or another event which helped you understand the joy in a fully inclusive welcome.

As you prepare to give a miracle minute, consider these pointers:

Questions to guide your story:

- What was a moment when you felt included in the church?
- Can you remember a moment when you knew God loved a LGBT person (yourself or someone else)?
- Can you describe a time when you saw the church in ministry with a LGBT person?
- Who inspires your work?
- Why are you a Reconciling United Methodist?

Crafting your Miracle Minute Story

- Tell *ONE* story, focusing upon a single event (don't give your entire biography)
- Focus on describing details not explaining thoughts
- Use feeling words like hurt, hoped, sad, happy...
- Remember, every good story has a beginning, middle and end
- Something has to happen – don't talk about what you think, but about an event or experience

Public speaking: *a little preparation can take away most of your anxiety as you prepare.*

- Speak calmly, slowly and naturally
- Practice in front of a mirror and/or with a friend at least twice
- Write out your story if it helps you organize your thoughts

One typed page double-spaced, size 14, Times New Roman font takes about 2 minutes to read

- If you get flustered, stop and take a deep breath. (Everyone will think it's a dramatic pause).
- Smile – we are a people of hope.

How to: Host a Reconciling United Methodist (RUM) Drive

Introduction

Reconciling United Methodists (RUMS) witness to the church and world God's welcome for persons of all sexual orientations and gender identities. By hosting a RUM drive, Reconciling communities invite members to join their voices in the songs of reconciliation and justice for all persons.

Why RUMS Matter

- Join The Movement: one person is a small voice, many people together are a powerful force for transformation.
- The Holy spirit has given us power to “be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8)
- Reconciling church/community members and campus ministry students are not automatically RUMS; therefore, members who register gain access to additional resources, support, and opportunities from the Reconciling movement.

Get People Excited

Begin on or conclude with Reconciling Sunday to encourage participation. Consider joining a friendly competition with another Reconciling community in your area – who can have a larger percentage of members sign up – in the end, everyone wins!

Needed Information:

Basic Information:

Full name, year of birth, email address, mailing address, cell, & primary phone number

Demographics:

Laity/Clergy
Person of Color
LGBQ/Trans/Ally/Family of LGBT

Reconciling United Methodists:

Commit – Register as an inclusive United Methodist with the RMN national office.

Share – Tell the story of why you are a RUM to two other people and invite them to join the movement.

Pledge – A monthly contribution to RMN of \$10 per month (automatic gifting options)

Collect and Report

- Pass out RUM cards in Sunday worship bulletins
- Encourage those who are already signed up to do so again, to allow RMN to verify their information.
- Email a spreadsheet of member's information to Stephanie@rmnetwork.org, or
- Mail sign-up cards to the RMN office at 3801 North Keeler Road, Chicago IL 60641

Celebrate!

When RMN has received your list of new Reconciling United Methodists, we will send you a report (how many), and encourage you to announce this witness in church, community or campus ministry during a Believe Out Loud moment or other time of celebration.

Believe Out Loud Community

Maybe, your Church is reconciling. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people are welcome, and you make your stand public through signs, messages in your bulletins, and public advertising. You wonder, **do we really need to talk about *this again*?**

Maybe your community has been Reconciling for many years, you have focused on many social justice issues, and have not celebrated or publicized your commitment to full inclusion in a while. You wonder, are we still a reconciling community? How can I get my fellow leaders involved? **What can we do in our local community to be part of the movement for full inclusion?**

Maybe your church is tired. The economy is still pretty shaky, things are always changing and it feels like one more leak in the roof will bring the entire church to ruin. Maybe membership has declined, or the neighborhood is changing. You know this is a vital part of the congregation's identity, but you are not sure **how to get people excited again?**

Maybe you are a pastor at a reconciling church, and you're not sure what this is all about, or you are a lay leader and you are not sure if your new pastor supports your church's traditional fully inclusive hospitality. You want to have a dialogue about inclusion, or at least find out if the church is still hospitable, and you want to know, **how do we talk about full inclusion again after all this time?**

Maybe your campus ministry is active in community work for marriage and full protections for persons of sexual and gender minorities. Your campus minister and student leaders are active in United Methodist annual conference, district and general events to help change United Methodist Policy, and you want to know, **what next?**

In 2010, Reconciling Congregations, Communities and Campus Ministries are invited to become *Believe Out Loud* Communities!

Believe Out Loud (BOL): A national campaign of United Methodists who are working to change hearts and minds by building relationships, through storytelling and organizing strategically. As part of the five year *Called to Witness* campaign, BOL brings together like minded United Methodists with a passion for full inclusion in order to:

- Tell Our Stories
- Build Relationships
- Organize Strategically
- Strengthen Annual Conference Teams (ACTs) and Local Congregations, Communities and Campus Ministries
- Grow the Movement for Full inclusion of persons of all sexual orientations and gender identities

By motivating Reconciling people across the United Methodist Connection, we are building relationships and creating strategic teams to influence policy change at the 2012 United Methodist General Conference.

Believe Out Loud: A Renewal Opportunity for Reconciling Churches, Communities and Campus Ministries

The Believe Out Loud (BOL) community program is designed to live out our Wesleyan heritage by deepening connections between members and encouraging faithful discipleship. By invigorating and inspiring local communities through storytelling, BOL reenergizes, helps members discover common passions, and invites solidarity with the oppressed. Believe Out Loud Stories teach us to us share our faith in a gentle, non-coercive manner, and inspire us to action as they touch our minds *and* our hearts.

A Believe Out Loud community will:

- Celebrate their fully inclusive welcome in a Reconciling Sunday Worship Service
- Present a Miracle Minute in worship at least four times per year (see How To: Miracle Minute)
- Hold a RUM (Reconciling United Methodist) Drive (see How to: RUM Drive)
- Sponsor a community, or 3 smaller, storytelling gathering (see How to: Plan a story gathering)
- Contribute an annual designated offering or budgeted pledge to Reconciling Ministries
- Send at least four video or typed Believe Out Loud Stories to the Reconciling office annually.
- Designate 2 representatives who attend an RMN Annual Conference gathering or *BOL* training

BOL communities are living out God’s call to hospitality and justice through active support of the wider reconciling movement. These communities make a prophetic difference in local United Methodist churches and the wider connection through their actions and commitment to the movement for the full inclusion of persons of all sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions.

Reasons to become a *Believe Out Loud* Community:

- Engage in long-term, direct impact on the policies of The United Methodist Church.
- Equip members to live out baptismal vows to “resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves.”
- Build evangelism skills like talking about your faith, meeting new people, and making connections.
- Connect with RMN through regular newsletters about God’s work across the United Methodist connection and in our world.
- Reduce isolation by connecting to the wider United Methodist Church.
- Learn new discipleship methods from other reconciling communities and church leaders.
- Share stories to motivate people, strengthen long time relationships, and develop new friendships.
- Encourage United Methodists in all churches, communities and campus ministries to Believe Out Loud
- Foster confidence among young people that sharing Christian values is as easy as telling a story.
- Deepen your community’s commitment to justice by addressing holistic inclusion.
- Download or order new resources from RMN – including videos, a new web-tutorial, studies from the publishers of “God Loves Each One,” regional trainings, and more.

How to: Plan a Believe Out Loud Story Gathering

“I changed my mind when I changed my heart” ~Bishop Jack Tuell

Introduction:

Stories touch our hearts, help us understand the pain of exclusion, and describe what a fully inclusive church might look like. They turn “political issues” into personal realities; and motivate action for justice. In a Reconciling Community, many people may care deeply for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) persons but not know how to express their support. A story gathering is a safe place where people can discover their common passion for full inclusion. Stories themselves are part of our relationships and build community; they encourage and inspire us, and can even change hearts and minds. Stories help us *feel* as well as think; by involving both our emotions and our reason, they answer both *why* and *how* questions.

Why do a story gathering?

- Invite new people into understanding
- Build community and deepen relationships
- Encourage one another to speak up about God’s love for all persons
- Gather support for the movement for full inclusion by discovering others with similar passions
- Motivate people to action

Instructions:

- Before you begin: Invite participants to sit with someone they don’t know well, consider, assigning seats or at least circles (tables) in order to separate families and encourage each one to sit with less known friends.
- Pass out the *Telling Your Believe Out Loud Story* handout

Safe Sharing Considerations: In order to encourage sharing, we strongly recommend establishing community boundaries for any story gathering, some might include:

- “What is shared here stays here:” respect the trust of the room
- Be supportive, do not attack someone’s story or criticize their experience
- Respect time limits for both stories and responses
- “Step Up Step Back:” pause and listen, and invite everyone to share

Practical/Logistical Considerations:

- Plan for the gathering to last between 90 minutes and two hours.
- Choose a time when many members or students can attend or are accustomed to being at church or the campus ministry (Sunday after service, Wednesday evening, etc.).
- Share invitations or announcements (*Support by a few key community leaders can really help*).
- Invite a volunteer or previous *Called to Witness* campaign participant to share their story.
- Consider playing one of the *BOL* example stories on the www.rmnwitness.org website.
- Set up round tables or chairs in circles of six.
- Make copies of *Telling your Believe Out Loud Story* handout for each participant.
- Bring watches or stopwatches for each group of six people.

Schedule: This schedule is intended to be instructive, not prescriptive. Please feel free to adapt as is appropriate for your local culture, needs or unique opportunities.

Time	Activity
12:00-12:15	Welcome & Introductions of participants If everyone knows names, ask a question that initiates conversation: What is your favorite film of all time? What is your favorite children's book? What time of day were you born? If you were a vegetable, what would you be, why? Have each person stand up and introduce the person on their right with their first name and ONE WORD in answer to the question you asked the group. (I.e. Tommy, asparagus) (If your group is larger than 30, skip the general introduction)
12:15-12:20	Establish Community Norms
12:20-12:30	What is Storytelling: Explain this gathering and share a video or volunteer example story
12:30-12:35	Reflection and Story Preparation: Give participants a few minutes of silence to prepare and invite them to sit quietly and prepare, read the handout, and/or write their story on paper
12:35-1:05	Small Group Storytelling In the groups of 6, have each person share one story. For each person: 2 minutes to tell their story** 2 minutes of responses from group 1 minute of transition to the next person Each group should pick one powerful story they would like to share with the large group
1:05-1:20	Large Group Sharing Invite groups to volunteer to share their best stories with the group After each story, have audience share affirmations <i>The length of this time should depend upon your community, but we do not do recommend more than 6 stories or 10 minutes of sharing with the entire group.</i>
1:20-1:30	Closing Close with a time to reflect upon the stories and trust shared today. Conclude with a prayer of thanksgiving for the trust and sharing, and God's desire to include the stories of <i>every single person</i> in The United Methodist Church Invite all participants to record and share their story with the Reconciling Ministries Network by video, email or mail.

It is very important for each group to have a time keeper. If timekeepers feel as if they are 'interrupting', the timekeeper could signal the two minutes are over by raising a hand to eye level.

Telling Your Believe Out Loud Story

Reflection

Take time to reflect on your own story. Go back as far as you can remember. Focus on the challenges you had to face, the choices you made about how to deal with them, and the satisfaction – or frustration - you experienced. Why did you make those choices? What were the values that affected your decisions? Why did you do this and not that? Keep asking yourself, “Why?” Many of us who are active in the Reconciling movement have stories of both loss and hope. If we did not have stories of loss, we would not understand that loss is a part of the world, we would have no reason to try to fix things. But we also have stories of hope. Otherwise we wouldn’t be working for a better Church.

Questions to guide your story reflection:

- When was a time when you felt included in the Church?
- What experiences have drawn you this United Methodist Church?
- Why are you part of a Reconciling congregation?
- When did you first know that God loved you? When God loved a lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) person in your life?
- Can you describe a time when you saw the church in ministry with a LGBT person?
- Why are you here today?

Elements of a Story:

Two (2) minutes: a short time demands that we get right to the plot, describe only the most poignant details.

Plot: A good story is drawn from the many choices points that you have made to define your life – each choice can be described as a **challenge** you faced, your **response**, and the **outcomes** that resulted.

Concrete Details: Describe what you saw, heard, felt, tasted or your actions and movements in the moment of the story

Values: Which actions you chose, why you made that immediate decision, and your tone as you tell the story best express what is important to you.

A Few helpful hints:

- Tell *ONE* story. Focus upon a single choice, event, person or memory.
- Use feeling words – sad happy, angry, etc. – and action verbs – sit, hug, run, think, etc.
- Detail specific sights, sounds, smells, and feelings to describe places, actions and people.
- Express emotions; help your listener feel with you, rather than just naming your emotions.
- Stories have plots: describe a time when something *happens* or someone *discovered* something
- Offer hope: End with what *can be* or *should be*, and name positive signs throughout the story
- Communicate values: your emotions, tone, choices, relationships, hopes, and outcomes describe the way the world *could* or *should be*

Plot: the core of a good story

Challenge: What question or challenge did you face? What made it difficult? Why was it *your* challenge? What factors were important to you as you faced your challenge?

Response: What did you do or decide? *Why* did you make the choice? What inspired courage or made you more fearful? How did you feel as you were speaking or acting?

Outcome: What happened next? What is the situation today? How did the outcome feel? Why? What did you learn?