



RECONCILING MINISTRIES NETWORK

• 123 W Madison St. Ste 2150 • Chicago, IL 60602 • 773.736.5526 • www.rmnetwork.org •

Reconciling Ministries Network mobilizes United Methodists of all sexual orientations and gender identities to transform our Church and world into the full expression of Christ's inclusive love.

Reconciling Communities - How to get started!

The process is different at every church, Sunday school class, campus ministry and group, but here are some common elements. A Reconciling community can be a church, regional network, Sunday School class, campus ministry and UM ministries beyond the local church.

1. Gather 4 or 5 or 10 people who are already inclusive in heart and form a Reconciling committee. This may be done at someone's home or the church. Share family stories and learn why people are interested. Offer an introduction to Reconciling Ministries, use our brochures, a DVD, or another resource you like.
2. This core group of Reconciling-friendly people becomes the first group to meet, study, share ideas, and articulate their own answers as to why this work is important. Visit the RMN website to get ideas, learn more and connect with Reconciling staff members or other communities in your annual conference.
3. Ask these core people to sign up as "Reconciling United Methodists." They will be kept informed about RMN successes and hopes through our newsletter and bi-monthly email digest. This allows them to feel support and to become articulate on the topics that arise in future discussions with others.
4. Evaluate when it is time to visit with the pastor/leader to let her/him know that you are serious about this next step of hospitality in your community. Go public in the community newsletter, inviting others to come to discuss and learn more.
5. Plan some education opportunities for the whole congregation.
 - Bible studies, essays, or videos
 - Study of the UMC policies that harm LGBT people and their families
 - Offer preachers, speakers, or panel discussions
 - Contact neighboring communities that are already Reconciling
 - Local PFLAG chapters and campus group could help put faces and hearts into the discussions
 - Field trips, socials and art shows to connect with the LGBT community in your community
6. Timeline. Strategize a time line for the process. The process needs to be thorough, allowing time for information to sink in, questions to be asked and relationships formed.

Reconciling Congregations do offer welcome to LGBT people in particular, because this is one group, the only group that is expressly made to feel unwelcome with the UMC. When a UM congregation wants lay LGBT people to feel welcome, they need to say it out loud.