



# RECONCILING MINISTRIES NETWORK

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December 28, 2011

Dear Reconciling Friends,

As we look forward to 2012, we are preparing for an exciting time in The United Methodist Church. In April, delegates will gather for General Conference and have the opportunity to remove exclusionary language from our official church policies. As RMN encourages church leaders and agencies to begin preparing for this change, we are blessed to share these Reconciling Sunday resources with congregations, campus ministries, and communities who are already working to live into God's full inclusive welcome.

This year's liturgy introduces our coalition's General Conference theme, *Love Your Neighbor* with its focus upon the parable of the Good Samaritan. We hope you find this useful as you celebrate your congregation's welcome for all persons of all sexual orientations and gender identities. In the worship resource packet, we have recommended several songs from supplemental United Methodist sources; all are available from Cokesbury and are fully cited in the worship notes at the end of the liturgy. You will also find this packet includes recommendations for articles, a guided meditation, and other resources to guide your reflection and study.

We believe *Love Your Neighbor* is a timely message for our church. Together, we must ask, "who is my neighbor," and remain open to God's answers. Jesus redirected this question by challenging us to ask, "are we responding to anyone who is in need?" As your Reconciling welcome seeks to include all the neighbors in your community, we work together to build a United Methodist Church who no longer discriminates. To help make this a reality, will you participate in General Conference?

Some of the ways your congregation might get involved include:

- Visit [www.gc2012.org](http://www.gc2012.org) to learn more about our coalition and General Conference witness,
- Sponsor volunteers who attend General Conference,
- Meet with some of your Annual Conference's delegates to share your reconciling story,
- Write letters to delegates, GC volunteers about the importance of Loving our Neighbors,
- Host a "General Conference watching party" (plenary will be live-streamed).

When your congregation does celebrate Reconciling Sunday, please consider emailing any photos, local publicity or press releases to RMN so that we might all share with one another the joy of being a church who welcomes our gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, straight, and queer neighbors!

Blessings,

*Rachel Harvey*  
Associate Executive Director

*Audrey J Krumbach*  
National Organizer

## Good Samaritan Discussion and Reflection Resources

### Studies and Articles on the themes in Luke 10: 25-37

“Toward a Welcoming Congregation”

An excellent essay on becoming *hospitable* congregations in light of the Luke 10 story.

<http://www.baylor.edu/content/services/document.php/53384.pdf>

“The Religious Cancer of Racism” by James Cone

<http://www.beliefnet.com/Faiths/2000/03/The-Religious-Cancer-Of-Racism.aspx>

“Let Us Be Impatient With Prejudice” By William Solon Coffin

<http://www.beliefnet.com/Love-Family/2000/02/Let-Us-Be-Impatient-With-Prejudice.aspx>

“Hearing Parables with the Early Church”

One of the sessions from a larger study, but a great stand-alone lesson on Luke 10

<http://www.baylor.edu/christianethics/ParablesStudyGuide2.pdf>

“The Narcissistic Reader and the Parable of the Good Samaritan” (From Journal of Religion & Society, Vol 5 2003)

<http://moses.creighton.edu/JRS/2003/2003-1.html>

### Discussion Studies and Personal Reflections:

“A guided meditation on the Parable of the Good Samaritan” By Rev. Troy Plummer, RMN’s executive Director

<http://rmnetwork.org/reconciling-sunday/reflection>

“Parable of the Good Samaritan: Written Commentary”

[http://www.gotell.org/pdf/commentary/Luke/Lk10\\_25-37\\_commentary.pdf](http://www.gotell.org/pdf/commentary/Luke/Lk10_25-37_commentary.pdf)

“what is it that constitutes righteousness ...is the spirit of extraordinary grace and kindness toward everyone, including our enemies. That's the way to the kingdom of God, a kingdom of peace.”

“The Neighbor is Near You”

[http://maryhinkle.typepad.com/pilgrim\\_preaching/2004/07/the\\_neighbor\\_is.html](http://maryhinkle.typepad.com/pilgrim_preaching/2004/07/the_neighbor_is.html)

Encouragement blog post on the Good Samaritan

[http://www.workingpreacher.org/dear\\_wp.aspx?article\\_id=371](http://www.workingpreacher.org/dear_wp.aspx?article_id=371)

“The Despised Ones Are the Lord” (an interfaith retelling of the Good Samaritan)

[http://www.bibleclaret.org/liturgy/daily/sundays\\_pierse/cycleC/C\\_15thSunOT.htm](http://www.bibleclaret.org/liturgy/daily/sundays_pierse/cycleC/C_15thSunOT.htm)

## A Service of Word and Welcome

### Opening/Processional Song

“Welcome”

For Everyone Born #7

### Words of Welcome

Welcome One and All to this time and place of worship.

Know that in this space you are welcome as you are, for who you are.

Together we celebrate all of God’s children – young, old and in-between; male, female and in-between; gay, lesbian, straight and in-between; the assured, the doubting, and the in-between; the optimistic, the cynics, and the in-between; the foolish, the wise, and the in-between.

Let us together center our spirits, our minds, our hearts on this time of worship.

### \*Call to Worship

The Spirit has called us to this place,

**to bring our whole selves to worship the God of Love.**

We lift our voices,

**We lift our hearts,**

We praise, we pray, we dance, we serve.

We have been called to love our God,

**and love our neighbors as ourselves.**

### \*Hymn

“Jesu, Jesu”

United Methodist Hymnal #432

### Lesson from the Hebrew Scriptures

Ruth 1:1-18

### Lesson from the Christian Scriptures

Mark 10:18-34

### \*Hymn

“The Summons”

The Faith We Sing #2130

### Witness to the Word

### Confession/Pardon/Peace

**God of Wonderers and Wanderers, we come together to confess that we are misers in a world of plenty – misers of hope, misers of joy, misers of love. When we are comfortable, confront us; when we are filled, empty us. Walk with us, we pray, as we proclaim your grace.**

(Time of Silent Prayer)

Indeed, the good news is this: Even in unexpected places – especially in unexpected places - God's grace abounds!

**God's grace abounds!**

There is a peace that the world did not give us, a peace that the world cannot take away. The Peace of Christ, be with you.

**And also with you.**

Let us share signs of peace and reconciliation with one another.

## Offertory

"Christ Has Broken Down the Wall"

## Doxology

Sung to UMH #95

With humble hearts we give our share,  
and work for justice everywhere.  
Proclaim God's love to all we meet,  
as if we are Christ's hands and feet.  
Amen.

## Litany of Loving

(Congregation is invited to sing verse one of "Help Us Accept Each Other," UMH 560)

Holy One,

Out of love, you swept over the waters and hovered over the face of the deep.

**Your love created all that was, all that is, and all that will be.**

Out of love, you brought your people out of oppression.

**Your love gave them a law and a land.**

When their love for you failed,

**Your love remained steadfast.**

And so together we sing...

(Congregation is invited to sing verse two of "Help Us Accept Each Other," UMH 560)

Gracious One,

Because of love, you gave us prophets to challenge and guide:

**Visionaries, dancers, dreamers, and scoundrels.**

Because of love, you sent Jesus of Nazareth, the full expression of your love.

**He healed the sick; he ate with sinners; he loved with abandon.**

Because of love, Jesus called together his disciples

**so that we might walk in the way that leads to love.**

And so together we sing...

(Congregation is invited to sing verse three of "Help Us Accept Each Other," UMH 560)

Passionate One,

Teach us, as Jesus did, to love our neighbors:

Our unhoused neighbors

**Our immigrant neighbors**

Our neighbors of different faiths

**Or who have no faith at all.**

Our LGBTQ neighbors

**Our heterosexist neighbors**

Our undereducated neighbors

**Our neighbors who see race as a barrier to loving others.**

Empower us, O God of all creation, to love our neighbors

**because out of love, you first loved us.**

And so together we sing...

(Congregation is invited to sing verse four of "Help Us Accept Each Other," UMH 560)

### \*Sending Forth

When Jesus calls us to love our neighbors,

**we are called to listen and respond.**

Go forth into the world to love and serve,

**to seek justice and share grace.**

### \*Closing Hymn

"Canticle of the Turning"

Upper Room Worship Book #16

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## Worship Notes

"Welcome." Words by Laurie Zelman; Music by Mark Miller © 2007 Abingdon Press from *For Everyone Born*, 7. Words of Welcome. Rev. Mary Kay Totty, Dumbarton UMC, Washington, DC as found at [www.manyvoices.org](http://www.manyvoices.org) Used with permission.

Call to Worship. Chett Pritchett, 2011. Used with permission.

Confession/Pardon/Peace. Chett Pritchett, 2009. Used with permission.

"Christ Has Broken Down the Wall." Words and Music by Mark Miller, © 2011 Choristers Guild.

"Doxology," Alternate lyrics, Chett Pritchett, 2011. Used with permission.

Litany of Loving. Chett Pritchett, 2011. Used with permission.

Sending Forth. Chett Pritchett, 2011. Used with permission.

"Canticle of the Turning." By Rory Cooney Upper Room Worshipbook, 16.

2011 Worship Resources compiled by Chett Pritchett, Washington, DC, and Rev. Justin White, Jackson, MS.