Together in One Place - Singing One Song!
by Rev. James Preston

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Acts 1: 1-2

Over 20 years ago, while serving in Texas, I was encouraged and renewed by the witness of Reconciling Ministries Network (RMN) and Methodist Federation for Social Action (MFSA) as I worked for justice in my local community, as well as the broader world and church. Receiving Open Hands magazine and the Social Questions Bulletin gave me hope for the church and God’s call to us to, “do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God.” As we started an MFSA chapter, RMN folks were a part of that dream. When my home church began the reconciling process, MFSA folks offered support. Both ministries have been connected over the years offering a voice for inclusion of LGBT persons, immigration reform, peace, labor rights, advocacy for those friends living in poverty, and more. I began attending General Conference in 1996, and at every conference since then, I feel the power of the Spirit as RMN and MFSA offer their witness together in hope!

In Acts 1, all are together in one place when the Holy Spirit breaks in and changes everything. A mighty wind and tongues of fire change a committed group of folks into a mighty movement that forever changed the world. These followers of Jesus were empowered to go into the world and offer grace, justice, and peace. In August, MFSA and RMN will gather together in Ohio for Sing a New Song. Though collaboration has always been present, this event calls us together in one place to sing a new and unified song of witness and justice for our church and the world. This event marks a “Pentecost moment” for our movements as we combine our many voices in an intentional and powerful effort to change the church and the world. So, make sure you join and gather in one place for this historic milestone.

Rev. James Preston is a former RMN employee and currently serves as a District Superintendent in the Northern Illinois Annual Conference.

Who Could Say No To That?
by Jennifer Battiest Neal

I said yes to preaching at Sing a New Song because I am excited to be a part of an event where people will come together, believing change can happen in the church, expecting that change will happen, and then making change happen. Change in the name of God’s Love - how could I say no to that?

"Sing a New Song is an RMN Convocation and an MFSA Voices of Faith ALL at the same time!"

Nine Convocations and Counting
by Ann Thompson-Cook

The very first RMN Convo in 1988 was an eye-opener to me. My congregation had just declared itself to be Reconciling, and I discovered a whole community of joyful folks who were committed to creating the “beloved kindom.” I give credit to RMN’s Convocations for teaching me what I needed at the time to expand my work, first as a straight-identified author of educational books on sexuality and gender and now as a leader of a new organization, Many Voices, dedicated to helping clergy and congregations figure out how to extend true welcome (www.manyvoices.org). The sharing, reflection and fellowship at the Convos equipped me, strengthened me, and lifted me up. Wherever you are on the journey, I look forward to seeing you in Ohio!
Reconciling Ministry at University UMC, Austin, TX

By Sally Furgeson and Bruce Kellison

University United Methodist Church (UUMC) in Austin, TX has a long history of supporting social justice and the inclusion of all people in the church’s life and ministry. Our Reconciling team joins the UUMC Church and Society Council, which coordinates advocacy for racial reconciliation and environmental awareness. They engage in political action, and support Austin Interfaith, iACT, and the Methodist Federation for Social Action (MFSA). Affiliating with RMN represents only our most recent public witness to full inclusion.

Our decade-long Reconciling process began with small-group activism and witness. One by one, more than a dozen Sunday School classes, United Methodist Women Circles, and Homerooms affiliated with RMN to show their solidarity with LGBTQI persons. As these affiliating groups grew, so did interest in a church-wide public statement. In August 2010, the Church Council formed a Reconciling Committee to facilitate events which included an eight-week class entitled “The United Methodist Church and the ‘H’ Word,” a roundtable forum for Social Action (MFSA). Affiliating with RMN represents only our most recent public witness to full inclusion.

We publicly proclaim that God’s grace is freely given to all and that it empowers all to receive the services of Christian ministry provided by the church. We recognize the work that remains, both inside and outside our walls, to reconcile with those marginalized and oppressed by the church. We are committed to the vision of a world in which the sacred worth of all people is honored.

We call for the removal of “incompatibility” language because it is not supported by Scripture, Tradition, Experience, or Reason. Because Jesus calls us to practice the reconciling love of God in every relationship, we have a responsibility to welcome everyone. Everyone.

New Reconciling Communities

Congregations

River Falls UMC of River Falls, WI
University UMC of Austin, TX
Saint Mark UMC of Atlanta, GA
Grace UMC of Hopkinton, MA
Good Samaritan UMC of Cupertino, CA
North Olmsted UMC of North Olmsted, OH
Grace UMC of Billings, MT

Communities:

DREAM (Daring to Reconcile and Embrace All in MS)
in the Mississippi AC
Sojourners Sunday School Class at St. John’s UMC of Memphis, TN
Circle 360 of UMW at First UMC of Austin, TX
Faith Conversations Class at First UMC of Boerne, TX
Genesis Apprentice Class at Trinity UMC of Salina, KS
Bread-and-Butter Pickles Class at Trinity UMC of Salina, KS
Join United Methodists united in love to find family, create community, break bread, share stories and mobilize for mission!

AUGUST 25-28, 2011

Sawmill Creek Resort
Huron, Ohio

More details and registration at:
www.sans2011.org
What does “safe space” mean? During this workshop we will discuss the importance of safe spaces in the church. We will consider the developmental stages of youth and young adults, primary characteristics of safe spaces, and logistical considerations, literally the where and when these safe spaces might take place. Participants will experience creating a “safe space” and leave the workshop with ideas for creating “safe spaces” for youth and young adults in their worship communities.

Holy Conversations: Sacred Sex Talk
Led by Vincent Cervantes & Rev. Karen Oliveto

Conversations within congregations about sexuality can be difficult. However, authentic conversation about who we are is a core theological concept. Whether we are straight or LGBTQ, we all desire to live authentically and to create a community that welcomes the expression of our joys and concerns. Through case studies and practical strategies, workshop participants will discover new ways to engage head and heart through conversations that are holy and healing, which deepen a sense of self and community.

Creating Safe Spaces: A Response to Bullying
Led by Joey Lopez & Rev. Joshua Noblitt

What does “safe space” mean? During this workshop we will discuss the importance of safe spaces in the church. We will consider the developmental stages of youth and young adults, primary characteristics of safe spaces, and logistical considerations, literally the where and when these safe spaces might take place. Participants will experience creating a “safe space” and leave the workshop with ideas for creating “safe spaces” for youth and young adults in their worship communities.

Welcoming our Transgender Brothers and Sisters
Led by Tina Seitz & Giselle Lawn

This workshop will address four primary questions and issues. We will talk about the social issues and forms of discrimination that impact transgender people. We will explore diversities within the transgender community. We will look at the reasons why it is important to reach out to the transgender community. Finally, we will review concrete steps you and your congregation can take to reach out to this community.

Ending Discrimination in the UMC
Led by Dr. W. Astor Kirk & Rev. Amy Stapleton

When exploring United Methodism’s struggles with “ecclesiastical institutional discrimination,” it’s clear that such discrimination has been present from the very beginning of the Methodist Movement. However, there are moments in our collective history when people have responded to God’s call to the beloved community, and policies and practices have shifted. Come explore and discuss what can be learned from past indicators of change and how, as a denomination, we might build on those today.

Creating Queer Space in the Church and Movement
Led by Dr. Randall Miller

Dr. Randall Miller will lead a workshop where LGBTQI folks can experience powerful affirmations of their whole selves – sexual and spiritual. Using Queer Theology, innovative worship resources, and playfulness, participants will share highlights of coming out stories and re-imagine Church as a sacred space in which LGBTQI people are celebrated. Those who do not identify as LGBTQI are welcome to attend and invited to listen rather than share. A resource guide is included. If you would like to contribute, please email submissions to randall4015@hotmail.com.

LGBTQI Affinity Groups: In order to facilitate relationships
Sponsored by Affirmation

United Methodists for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Concerns will facilitate three affinity groups to celebrate and support persons of these identities. Three gatherings will include: bisexual persons and couples; transgender persons and couples; and a safe space for all LGBTQI persons whom God has called to ministry – ordained or denied ordination.
Workshop Listing

A. BEING THE CHURCH
   1. Affirmations of a Dissenter: Fire Drawn, Embers Smoldering
   2. New Places for New People
   3. Breathing New Life into Worship: Singing New Songs of Justice and Faith

B. CHANGING CHURCH
   1. Holy Conversations: Sacred Sex Talk
   2. Ending Discrimination in the UMC: How Can the Past Inform the Future?
   4. Working Justice Issues Within Your Community: Marriage, Transgender Discrimination and more!
   5. Singing Your Own Song: Leading the Reconciling Process in Your Congregation
   6. Taking Reconciling Home

C. DOING JUSTICE
   1. Environmental Racism
   2. Beginning/End of Life
   3. Immigration in Rhetoric and Realities
   4. Divestment: A Strategy for Peace in the Holy Land
   5. LGBTIQ and Undocumented Struggles: The Parallels and Intersectionality of Two Movements

D. QUEERLY FORWARD
   1. Creating Queer Space in the Church and the Movement
   2. Creating Safe Spaces: A Response to Bullying
   3. Apologetics: Queering the Bible, Theology, and Pastoral Care
   4. Transgender 101
   5. Welcoming our Transgender Brothers and Sisters

Full workshop descriptions at www.sans2011.org/workshops

Miracle Moments

Testify to the ministries for full inclusion you’re engaged in through a miracle moment at Sing a New Song!
You don’t need to be present in Ohio to send a message to the movement - check out sans2011.org/miraclemoments to submit a video or written testimony today!

General Conference Plenary

Don’t miss the General Conference plenary at Sing a New Song.
Come celebrate our movement’s progress, act for change, and launch our upcoming campaign.
Learn about our upcoming campaign and General Conference presence!

Workshop Registration

If you’ve already registered for Sing a New Song and haven’t chosen your workshops, it is important that you register for workshops today. Log into your registration by following the directions below to add your workshops or email your choices to the RMN office at james@rmnetwork.org.

2. Click “Already Registered?” next to the email address field.
3. Enter the email address and password that you used during your initial registration.
   [If you have forgotten your password click “Forgot Your Password?” and your password will be emailed to you in a few minutes.]
4. In the “Edit” column, click “Agenda”.
5. Scroll to the bottom of the page.
6. In the “Workshop Registration” section, choose your top three workshops.
7. Click “Continue”, then click “Finalize”
9. Click “Update Your Registration”

If your changes were successfully updated you will see a green box that says, “Your registration is complete.”

Workshop Listing

A. BEING THE CHURCH
   1. Affirmations of a Dissenter: Fire Drawn, Embers Smoldering
   2. New Places for New People
   3. Breathing New Life into Worship: Singing New Songs of Justice and Faith

B. CHANGING CHURCH
   1. Holy Conversations: Sacred Sex Talk
   2. Ending Discrimination in the UMC: How Can the Past Inform the Future?
   4. Working Justice Issues Within Your Community: Marriage, Transgender Discrimination and more!
   5. Singing Your Own Song: Leading the Reconciling Process in Your Congregation
   6. Taking Reconciling Home

C. DOING JUSTICE
   1. Environmental Racism
   2. Beginning/End of Life
   3. Immigration in Rhetoric and Realities
   4. Divestment: A Strategy for Peace in the Holy Land
   5. LGBTIQ and Undocumented Struggles: The Parallels and Intersectionality of Two Movements

D. QUEERLY FORWARD
   1. Creating Queer Space in the Church and the Movement
   2. Creating Safe Spaces: A Response to Bullying
   3. Apologetics: Queering the Bible, Theology, and Pastoral Care
   4. Transgender 101
   5. Welcoming our Transgender Brothers and Sisters

Full workshop descriptions at www.sans2011.org/workshops

Miracle Moments

Testify to the ministries for full inclusion you’re engaged in through a miracle moment at Sing a New Song!
You don’t need to be present in Ohio to send a message to the movement - check out sans2011.org/miraclemoments to submit a video or written testimony today!

General Conference Plenary

Don’t miss the General Conference plenary at Sing a New Song.
Come celebrate our movement’s progress, act for change, and launch our upcoming campaign.
Learn about our upcoming campaign and General Conference presence!

Workshop Registration

If you’ve already registered for Sing a New Song and haven’t chosen your workshops, it is important that you register for workshops today. Log into your registration by following the directions below to add your workshops or email your choices to the RMN office at james@rmnetwork.org.

2. Click “Already Registered?” next to the email address field.
3. Enter the email address and password that you used during your initial registration.
   [If you have forgotten your password click “Forgot Your Password?” and your password will be emailed to you in a few minutes.]
4. In the “Edit” column, click “Agenda”.
5. Scroll to the bottom of the page.
6. In the “Workshop Registration” section, choose your top three workshops.
7. Click “Continue”, then click “Finalize”
9. Click “Update Your Registration”

If your changes were successfully updated you will see a green box that says, “Your registration is complete.”

Spring 2011 • Katalyst | 5
Name: ____________________________
Address: ____________________________
Cell Phone: ____________________________
Local Church: ____________________________
Name as it should appear on name tag: ____________________________

**Full Registration**

Full Registration does not include All-Day Forums, Breakfast Table Talks, or Additional Meal Plan

- Submitted by July 25, 2011
  - Adult: $260  □ Student: $130  □ Child*: $25
- Submitted after July 25, 2011
  - Adult: $290  □ Student: $130  □ Child*: $25

**Partial Registration**

- Thursday Evening (includes cookout) $60
- Friday $80
- Saturday (includes banquet) $100
- Sunday Morning $50

**Ohio Students Rate:**
Ohio students attending only Fri. evening - Sun noon
- Ohio Student: $100

**All-Day Forums**

9am - 3pm Thursday (Choose one) ----- $30
- Parents Reconciling Network
- MOSAIC/OnFire
- Reconciling Ministries Clergy
- United Methodist of Color for a Fully Inclusive Church (UMOC)
- Methodist Federation for Social Action
  – Dismantling Racism
- Transgender
- Building Reconciling Communities

**Additional Options:**

Add. Meal Plan (Friday Lunch & Dinner, Saturday Lunch)
- Adult Meal Plan $60
- Children’s Meal Plan (Age 5 - 17) $30
- Children’s Meal Plan (Age 4 and under) FREE
- Guest Cookout and Banquet Pass $53

Guest’s Name: ____________________________

- Breakfast Table Talks $30
  (Includes Friday, Saturday, Sunday Breakfast)
- One Way Shuttle Fee $10
- Round Trip Shuttle Fee $20
  [Shuttles are to / from Cleveland Int. Airport Only]

**Total:**

**Return this Registration Form To:**
Reconciling Ministries Network
3801 North Keeler Avenue | Chicago, IL 60641-3007
773.736.5526 Phone | 773.736.5475 Fax

In case of cancellation, we will refund your payment less a $20 processing fee.

☐ Please find my check enclosed. Please make all checks payable to **Reconciling Ministries Network.**

☐ Please charge my credit card:
  __________-_________-________
  exp. ______/_____
  □ MC □ Visa □ AmEX

☐ Please send me a scholarship application.

☐ This is a child/youth registration. (age 3 - 17)
  Age: ____________________________

☐ Special Needs:

* Children are between the ages of 3-17
Farewell
by Rev. Carl Davis

“Mobilizing United Methodists of all sexual orientations and gender identities to transform our Church and world into the full expression of Christ’s inclusive love” is the mission of Reconciling Ministries Network.

For the past two years it has been my privilege and honor to help RMN’s more than 2,000 donors use their financial resources to accomplish that mission. Getting to know our donors from coast to coast has been a great joy. Seeing the impact they have on our Church and world has been nothing less than heart touching.

As of May 1, 2011, I will be leaving the staff of RMN to assume the role of Development Director at the Center for Conflict Resolution, a Chicago area non-profit that provides mediation services. In this, my last Katalyst article as your Director of Development, I want to say thank you.

Thank you to the founding members of the Reconciling Movement who organized against great odds over twenty-five years ago and created the powerful voice for inclusion that exists today.

Thank you to the wonderful pastors who sacrificially serve in The United Methodist Church and provide their parishioners with vital ministry in the spirit of Jesus even when their own denomination fails to officially see their sacred worth.

Thank you to the board, volunteers and staff of RMN who use their gifts and graces to bring about the day when “all” really does mean ALL in The United Methodist Church.

Thank you to the young adult just coming out of the closet and reconciling his or her faith and sexuality - for reminding the rest of us of the urgency of our work today.

Most of all, thank you to each person who supports RMN with the time, treasure and talent that enable our mission to become reality.

As a young gay man pursuing ordination, Convocation connected me with a supportive community who gave me the strength to continue to fight for the pursuit of my own vocation and equality. I would never have been able to attend without a scholarship, thank you! (Anonymous)

As a young adult just coming out of the closet and reconciling his or her faith and sexuality - for reminding the rest of us of the urgency of our work today. (Joey)

Getting a scholarship meant that I could gather with like minded United Methodists; it helped me see I am not alone, but am one of a family working to see our church become the inclusive family that Christ intended us to be. (Joey)

Your donations to the Sing a New Song Scholarship Fund make a difference!
Consider making a donation so that someone else might have the opportunity to become more involved in our blessed community.
Visit http://donate.sans2011.org

Gifts in Memory and Honor of...

In Honor Of...
Micheal & Kevin Eddings were honored by Steven Davis
Joyce & Robert Swing were honored by Deborah Maria
St. Mark UMC of Atlanta was honored by David Story
Rev. Gregory Dell was honored by Joan Uebele
Tommy MacFarland & Daniel Nash were honored by Thomas MacFarland

In Memory Of...
Marguerite Jhonson remembers Rev. Miriam Crist
Maureen Vetter remembers Helen Witters
First UMC of Oneonta, New York has organized 13 participants for Sing A New Song. The van will fit eight friendly United Methodists for the eight hour drive with other combinations of cars for the New York to Ohio caravan. The group ranges from teenagers (two, one a PK) to 81 year old Verna. Margaret says “It is just one of the things we do. For the first time ever, we missed Justice and Joy and that isn’t going to happen again!”

The crescendo of anticipation is growing week-by-week as folks from Western Pennsylvania continue to register for Sing A New Song! We are organizing carpoolsv ...watch for the caravan coming across the Ohio Turnpike on August 24th!

How Are You Getting to Sing a New Song?
Who Are You Sending?