

Who's Who?

Advocates for full inclusion of lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender and queer persons in the life and ministry of The United Methodist Church are myriad. When the discriminatory statement was added to the Book of Discipline at the General Conference 1972, LBGTO individuals and their families and friends were shocked. They had long served as church school teachers and trustees, treasurers, choir members, nursery attendants and ushers. They had played the organ and piano, directed the choir, served as Lay Leaders, denominational executives and been dispatched to the mission field. They had prepared the communion elements and some had consecrated the bread and raised the cup. Quietly they began to talk with one another and trusted allies. Forty five years later they are speaking louder than ever. There are differences in focus, strategy and methodology among the groups listed here (some advocates participate in multiple groups) but of this you can be certain - they share the same mission - to remove the discriminatory language and end the harmful practices which exclude God's lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender, intersex and queer children from FULL participation in the UMC...transforming our church and world in the love of Christ.

AFFIRMATION

"As an independent voice of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer people, Affirmation radically reclaims the compassionate and transforming gospel of Jesus Christ by relentlessly pursuing full inclusion in the Church as we journey with the Spirit in creating God's beloved community." Begun as the United Methodist Gay Caucus in 1975, later named Gay United Methodists (GUM) after General Conference 1976 they became AFFIRMATION. After General Conference 1984, when additional discrimination denying ordination to "self-avowed practicing homosexuals" was added to UMC policy, Affirmation created the Reconciling Congregations Program. Today they are a small but faithful group. Volunteer driven.

P.O. Box 1021, Evanston, Il. 60204 • www.umaffirm.org

RECONCILING MINISTRIES NETWORK

(originally Reconciling Congregations Program)

"...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."

Currently includes 837 congregations, communities and campus ministries, over 34,000 individual Reconciling United Methodists, a part-time African Central Conference Co-ordinator, a part-time Trans ministry organizer, three fulltime and one half time regional organizers, Directors of Development, Finance & Administration and Communications, a

part-time communications associate, a part-time southern field organizer, a grant supported Georgia field organizer, one seminary intern and the five extension ministries listed below and next page (each of which have a representative seat on the RMN Board of Directors):
Matthew Berryman, Executive Director (resignation effective 6/1/2017)
123 W. Madison, Suite 2150, Chicago, IL 60602 • 773/736-5526 • www.rmnetwork.org

1) UMOC - United Methodists of Color for a Fully Inclusive Church

Founded in 2000, United Methodists of Color for a Fully Inclusive Church (UMOC) brings together a diversity of persons across racial and ethnic lines for engaging, racism, heterosexism, and homophobia in Christianity and the United Methodist Church. We work together—as a prophetic people of color movement in the church—to call on our denomination to embrace the multicultural realities of our society and our world. If the church is to be a vibrant instrument of God’s love, faithful to the justice of Jesus, then it must be a place that welcomes all.

2) Parents Reconciling Network - UM Parents of LGBT Children

Parents Reconciling Network (PRN) is an organization of United Methodist parents of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender children. Begun as an informal group in 1999 their purpose was to present a visible witness of parents in support of ending the denomination’s anti-homosexual stance and providing their homosexual children the same rights as heterosexual United Methodists at The United Methodist Church’s 2000 General Conference. Their work and witness continues. Teams of PRN folks make the colorful rainbow stoles used for witnessing. The PRN Steering Committee is available for parental support throughout the connection.

3) MOSAIC - Methodist Students for an All Inclusive Church

MOSAIC began in May of 1996 at the United Methodist Student Forum in Oklahoma City. A group of college student participants were aggrieved by the decision of the Forum not to encourage the national church assembly to strike homophobic language from church law. In response, several students gathered to create a national student coalition and network in support of ministry inclusive of all people. We are comprised of students, seminarians, and young adults who affirm all sexual orientations and gender identifications as gifts of God. We claim the United Methodist Church as a sacred space for sacred people and call it to be an incarnation of the inclusive kingdom of God. Therefore, we seek to build relationships and engage in conversations with both those who claim the Church and those who struggle to find their place in it.

4) Reconciling Ministries Clergy

The Reconciling Ministries Clergy is comprised of persons called to ordained ministry within the United Methodist Church who summon the church to a deeper level of spiritual and theological integrity in relationship to persons of all sexual orientations and gender identities and their full inclusion in all aspects of the church’s life. The network is dedicated to active forms of teaching, organizing, strategizing, resistance and support for one another to help the church become more faithful to the radical love of Christ. Currently inactive.

5) UMATI - United Methodist Alliance for Transgender Inclusion

UMATI challenges the United Methodist Church (UMC) to live into its visionary policy of being a church free from gender discrimination at every level, equipping and empowering people to

transform our church and society into places that celebrate gender diversity. Embracing the God-given reality that from our genesis we are created in God's image, UMATI understands gender diversity as a divine gift. Accordingly, we particularly welcome, support, and advocate for those who are transgender, gender variant, and otherwise transcend binary gender expectations. Our work takes the form of three interrelated ministries:

- **Nurture:** Offer support, fellowship, and connections to transgender individuals and their families throughout the UMC.
- **Outreach:** Provide tools, resources, and strategies to work toward the full inclusion of transgender people in the church and society.
- **Witness:** Provide a public witness in support of transgender people in local congregations, at UMC Conferences, and in society.

CHURCH WITHIN A CHURCH

"A progressive Methodist related movement Being the fully inclusive and just church."

Begun following General Conference 2000, by Rev. Greg Dell and others, who wanted to move away from trying to reform one denomination to modeling full inclusion, being church in new ways. Offers ordination and recognition of orders, supports new church development and presents educational opportunities and forums.

Cathy Knight, Executive Director

P.O. Box 578524, Chicago, IL 60657-8524 • 312/282-1556 • www.cwac.us
revailsumc.com • www.kairoscomotion.org

LOVE PREVAILS

evolution 3D: disclose(t), divest, disrupt

continues a strategic presence in the UMC which began in 2011 when the Wisconsin Annual Conference tried Rev. Amy DeLong for being what it called "a self-avowed practicing homosexual" and for officiating at a Holy Union of two loving women. Amy's supporters organized under the banner *Love On Trial* and after her sentencing, a decision which allowed for restorative justice, supporters and others renamed their ongoing witness and strategic direct action for change in the UMC, Love Prevails. A ministry of Kairos CoMotion, program oversight, activist support and fiscal agency is provided through the Kairos CoMotion's Board of Directors.

Rev. Amy DeLong, Executive Director

www.loveprevailsumc.com • www.kairoscomotion.org

MIND (Methodists in New Directions)

a Reconciling ministry in the New York Annual Conference

Methodists in New Directions (MIND) begun in 2006, is a grassroots organization of United

Methodists working to end the denomination's doctrinal prejudice and institutional discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and committed to living more fully into God's radical Welcome right now and right here. They are a regional group, organizing on the conference level within the New York Annual Conference (NYAC) of the United Methodist Church (UMC). They are part of a larger reconciling movement and are affiliated with the national Reconciling Ministries Network (RMN). * They also work closely with the Church Within a Church movement (CWAC) and the New York chapter of the Methodist Federation for Social Action (MFSA). They work year-round with local congregations to help them develop and expand LGBT-inclusive ministries. They offer training and resources and sponsor speakers and events. They have had strong and visionary leadership and so have served as a model for other regional reconciling work, too numerous to list. Volunteer driven.

212 E. Capital St. N.E., Washington, DC 20003 • MINDnyac@gmail.com • www.mindny.org

UNITED METHODIST QUEER CLERGY (also known as #CalledOUT)

On May 9, 2016, as General Conference 2016 was opening, 111 LGBTQI clergy and candidates for ministry released "A Love Letter to the Church from Your LGBTQI Religious Leaders." Afterwards, they were joined by 39 other signers. Since that time they encouraged the candidacies and election of LGBTQI persons to the episcopacy and claimed their authentic presence in the UMC. Still at its beginning, structure is being developed, leadership is emerging, and strategies for continuing their witness and service to the church and world are being crafted. Their current fiscal agent is MFSA.

MFSA (Methodist Federation for Social Action)

"...mobilizes clergy and laity within the United Methodist Church to take action on issues of peace, poverty and people's rights within the church, the nation and the world."

Founded in 1907 to address human suffering, MFSA is often called the conscience of Methodism. It is symbolized by a plumb line, the measure of justice God has placed in our midst.

Darlene DiDomenick, Interim Executive Director

212 E. Capital St. N.E., Washington, DC 20003 • 202/546-8806 • mfsa@mfsaweb.org • www.mfsa.org

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR COALITION

Love Your Neighbor was the name the coalition of progressive caucuses in the UMC organized under for General Conference 2012 and 2016. Then co-coordinator, Steve Clunn, was originally funded through a grant which ended. Fiscal agent remains MFSA.

INSTITUTE FOR WELCOMING RESOURCES

Begun as an ecumenical co-operative effort of welcoming church programs in the early 1980s, producing the award winning magazine *Open Hands*, the study *Claiming the Promise* and worship resources, *Shaping Sanctuary*, IWR, growing in its impact, incorporated in 2002 as Welcoming Ministries Incorporated but began operating under the name Institute for Welcoming Resources the following year. The purpose of this ecumenical group is to provide the resources to facilitate a paradigm shift in multiple denominations whereby churches become welcoming and affirming of all congregants regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity. Early sponsors included:

- More Light Presbyterians (Presbyterian)
- Open & Affirming Ministries (The Christian Church/Disciples of Christ)
- Open and Affirming Program (United Church of Christ)
- Reconciling Ministries Network (United Methodist)
- Reconciling in Christ Program (Lutheran Churches/North America)
- Welcoming and Affirming Baptists (Baptists)

In 2006 they merged with and became a program of the National LGBTQ Task Force. Their "Building an Inclusive Church" material, rooted in what they term "graceful engagement," serves as the basis of RMN's congregation- based organizing model. As of 2017 they now have eleven denominational partners.

IWR's vision is that of its sponsors, the welcoming church programs. The task assigned to IWR is to provide or assist in the production of resources to make possible this paradigm shift in Christianity. It will do this by:

- the development, production, and distribution of resources to support the welcoming church movement
- the development and planning of conferences and training events designed to inspire, empower, and equip members and leadership in the welcoming church movement
- the expansion of networks and the creation of coalitions within and beyond the welcoming church movement.

Rodney McKenzie, Faith Work Director

Debra Peevey, Lead Ecumenical Organizer

122 Franklin Ave. W, Suite 210, Minneapolis, MN 55404 • 612/821-4397 • www.welcomingresources.org

TRANSFAITH

We believe that the experiences, spiritual vitality, and leadership of people of transgender experience make our communities stronger and more vibrant. We bring people together to develop conversation, strategy, and community in order to help us all reach our full potential. Transfaith™ is a national non-profit that is led by transgender people. They are a multi-tradition, multi-racial, multi-gender organization working to support transgender spiritual/cultural workers and their leadership in community. They work closely with many allied organizations (including RMN's UMATI), secular, spiritual, and religious, transgender-led and otherwise.

Chris Paige, Executive Director

Philadelphia • www.transfaith.org

SOULFORCE

*"We seek not admittance into broken institutions and bankrupt ideologies. **We can't just get ourselves free, we have to get all of us free.** So as we evolve, we understand our job to be two-fold: attend to the healing of the individual and support reconciliation across religious belief AND demand that the practices, policies, and institutions that uphold so many systems of oppression undergo wholesale change." Soulforce's goal is to turn this world upside down and inside out in the name of justice and equity for folks across all marginalized racial, sexual, and gender identities. They seek to do the kind of collective activism that makes souls burst as they free themselves from spiritual violence.*

Soulforce often provides United Methodist related LGTBQ justice seeking groups with non-violent direct action training.

Havin Herrin, Executive Director

P.O. Box 2499, Abilene, TX 79601 • www.transfaith.org • 800/810-9143 • www.soulforce.org

BELIEVE OUT LOUD

Believe Out Loud is an online community that empowers Christians to work for justice for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) people. Reaching a monthly average of more than 5 million people per month, they are the leading platform in Christian faith and LGBTQ advocacy.

Members of Believe Out Loud hold many distinct identities, and together we are creating a world where all Christian churches welcome and affirm LGBTQ people. Reconciling Ministries Network is an affiliate. On our [daily blog](#) and [social networks](#), we offer a community where friends and allies can access resources for their journeys and share their own stories of Christian faith and LGBTQ advocacy. Rooted in a framework of justice, Believe Out Loud affirms our members in their identities and challenges LGBTQ Christians to “go and do likewise” (Luke 10:37).

Believe Out Loud was formed in 2009 to encourage Christian clergy to voice their affirmation for LGBTQ people. We continue this work by inviting affirming churches to publicly proclaim their welcome through our [Welcoming Church Map](#), which is a critical resource for LGBTQ Christians and allies looking for a church home. Through our [campaigns feature](#), we provide opportunities for our members to advocate for LGBTQ people in their churches, denominations, and communities.

OTHER CROSS DENOMINATIONAL LGBTQ AFFIRMING ORGANIZATIONS IN WHICH SOME UM’S PARTICIPATE:

THE REFORMATION PROJECT

The Reformation Project is a Bible-based, Christian grassroots organization that works to promote inclusion of LGBT people by reforming church teaching on sexual orientation and gender identity. Our vision is of a global church that fully affirms LGBT people.

Matthew Vines, Founder/Executive Director

P.O. Box 14862, Lenexa, KS, 66285 • www.reformationproject.org

THE GAY CHRISTIAN NETWORK

Founded in 2001, Gay Christian Network is an international network of Christians working for a fully inclusive Christian community and a world where all people are treated as the beloved children of God. It is [our mission](#) to transform attitudes toward LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer) people and bring about a day when the church is the biggest ally and defender of LGBTQ people rather than a chief opponent.

Justin Lee, Executive Director

P.O. Box 96190, Portland, OR, 97296 • 800/268-3688 • www.gaychristian.net

PFLAG

Founded in 1972, PFLAG is the nation's largest family and ally organization with over 400 chapters . Many UM parents get their first support and education in PFLAG and several have started chapters in their regions.

Elizabeth Kohm, Interim Executive Director

national office: 1828 L Street, NW, Suite 660, Washington, DC. 20036 202/467-8180 www.pflag.org

UMARC

United Methodist Association of Retired Clergy - "Toward an Inclusive Church"

Founded following the April 2017 Judicial Council ruling regarding the election, consecration and assignment of Bishop Karen Oliveto.

Convenor, Don Messer

Other retired UM Clergy welcome to sign on.

umarc.org

We affirm the statement on the "Inclusiveness of the Church" in The Constitution of The United Methodist Church (Part I, Division One, Article IV), and we declare:

- 1. Our unwavering support of our duly nominated, elected, consecrated, and assigned Bishop Karen Oliveto, and a call to others in the church to stop their harassment and abuse of our spiritual episcopal leader.*
- 2. Our commitment to stand in solidarity with LGBTQ laity, clergy, and candidates for ministry, speaking and working to ensure the dignity and safety of all persons in church and society.*
- 3. Our hope that the unity of the church will be attained, but not at the price of sacrificing God's inclusive love in Jesus Christ for all people.*
- 4. Our prayer that the Commission on a Way Forward and the 2019 General Conference will respond to the Holy Spirit by developing a new church polity that will truly create the inclusive church envisioned in United Methodism's Constitution.*

***Resources aggregated by Rev. Dr. Bonnie Beckonchrist**

Periodically other United Methodist related groups establish Facebook, Twitter, and other social media presence to facilitate communications and messaging. Facebook currently includes Progressive Methodists, To Bishop KO with Love - (in support of Bishop Oliveto preceding Judicial Council), Affirm Inclusion Resist Exclusion (in support of Rev. David Meredith in face of complaint), etc.