

KATALYST

From the Koine Greek "kattalage" meaning "reconciliation."

Fall 2005

JUDICIAL COUNCIL RULINGS - OCTOBER 2005

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The authentic witness of Beth Stroud through trial, appeal, and judicial council continues to stand out as faithful, grace-filled, Christ-centered challenge to a legalistic church. The Reconciling Ministries Network board was present in Houston to witness the oral arguments of the Judicial Council. Prejudice abounded preaching fear of chaos. Confusion marked the Virginia case's denying membership to a gay man. Presumptions of the sinfulness of gay and lesbian people in loving covenant relationships echoed in the hearing room.

Bad law leads to bad decisions. Anyone who was not clear on the fact that the conflict causing "incompatibility clause" harms lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons should now have 20-20 vision of the closed door shut in the face of these faithful United Methodists. Bad law leads to bad decisions. Are we yet awake?

The Judicial Council decisions in October highlight the unmet hopes of Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors. Are we yet awake to the crisis of conscience our church must face? Are we yet awake to the Spirit outpacing the church calling us forward to the reign of God? Are we yet awake to the Spirit's full participation in the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons?

Bad law leads to bad decisions and too many of us are still asleep. The opposing council affirmed the gifts and graces of Beth Stroud as a pastor. They proclaimed that "this case is not about the gifts and graces of a gifted pastor; this is about the law." The Holy Spirit calls us forward to be the church of Jesus Christ, the full body of Christ, including all those marginalized based on status. The Spirit of God revealed to us in Jesus asks, "Are we yet awake?"



Hearts On Fire

A pilgrimage is a journey made by a person of faith to a holy place. As faithful United Methodists, reconcilers made a pilgrimage to Lake Junaluska. From 40 states and DC, by car, train, shuttle, plane, or bus; in caravans or independently, we arrived trusting the baptismal message of Watermarked—that we are permanently, powerfully part of the family.

As family at our home campground, ignited with hearts on fire, reconciling pilgrims proclaimed, "We are United Methodists of all sexual orientations and gender identities making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world." Out of breath climbing the hill to the foot of the cross or climbing the hill to worship at Shackford, each step marked hope—hope for sustenance for the journey, hope for love overcoming all barriers, hope for meeting Christ anew, hope for hearts "strangely warmed" to create a future with hope.

"When the Feast of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Without warning there was a sound like a strong wind, gale force—no one could tell where it came from. It filled the whole building. Then, like a wildfire, the Holy Spirit spread through their ranks, and they started speaking in a number of different languages as the Spirit prompted them." (Peterson, The Message, Acts)

Spreading the message like wildfire, that's hope! See exciting photos and details of Hearts on Fire inside.

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MEET EIGHT NEW RECONCILING COMMUNITIES!

Meet the Congregations

The Community of Reconciliation, Pittsburgh, PA, is a federated church of the UMC, UCC, Presbyterian, American Baptist and Disciples of Christ denominations. The congregation has carefully followed all five welcoming denominational processes and has embraced participation in each of the five programs.

Aptos Community UMC, Aptos, CA made the commitment in July to affiliate with RMN. The decision was made "by an overwhelmingly positive majority." They chose to affirm the UMC motto, "Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors." They view their action as vital not only to their community, but to the Church at large.

St. Luke's United Methodist Church, Washington, DC has always considered itself open and accepting of all. This enabled St. Luke's to complete the process in less than a year. Motivation came last December by the defrocking of Beth Stroud and the subsequent announcement by her cousin Sandi Stroud during the Joys and Concerns portion of the service the following Sunday.

Greene Community Church, United Methodist, in Greene, RI has been reading the news stories about the actions against GLBT people in various places and churches. This is a small congregation in a rural area that responded with grace and action. While they had been seeing themselves as open to all, they decided it was time to be public in their welcome.



St. Luke's UMC

Meet the Communities

The Epiphany Class of First UMC in Austin, TX attracts "Couples and Singles age 40+". Members wondered how a GLBT person would know that they would be greeted with warmth if they ventured into that class. With their Reconciling welcome they become the third of 20 classes at FUMC to affiliate with RMN.

The Servant Leadership School of Central Ohio is an extension ministry of Broad Street UMC in Columbus Ohio. Their vision: "To create an all inclusive community of Servant Leaders who can support, nurture, and encourage each other in their faith journeys following God, faithfully seeking to bring forth the Realm of God in ministry with persons who are or have been excluded or marginalized."

The "Expand the Circle" organization in the Southwest Texas Conference has sponsored educational opportunities and witnessed at annual conference. They officially have 64 members and 13 "friends" (persons who support our work, but are not able to become public). They also have a mailing list of 250+ persons.

AWE now stands for "Affirming and Welcoming Everybody"! This group of Reconcilers at Christ UMC in Lincoln, Nebraska has committed themselves to welcome within both their local church and the whole UMC. The group includes a variety of folks including families with young children who can see a better vision for our Church.

JUDICIAL COUNCIL RULINGS - CONTINUED

Bishop Kammerer stood before the Judicial Council reminding them of the sacred worth of all individuals. She cautioned the council not to violate the statement of Inclusivity in our UMC constitution prohibiting discrimination based on status.

Bad theology leads to bad law which leads to bad decisions. The effort to split the soul of LGBT persons, body from spirit, being from living is bad theology.

Persons of sacred worth, watermarked in baptism, with hearts set on fire by the Holy Spirit, "Are we yet awake?" The Spirit calls us forth. The Spirit sets Christ before us naming us children of God. Are we yet awake? Bad theology has led to bad law which has led to bad decisions which clearly sacrifices children of God.



Beth Stroud and Chris Paige

Such sacrifice is unacceptable. Are you awake? The Holy Spirit outpaces us and continues to call gay and lesbian persons into ministry. The Holy Spirit outpaces us and continues to bless gay families with love and fidelity and children. The Holy Spirit outpaces us and causes the scales to fall from our own eyes. Bad decisions illuminate the fear of those that can see the Holy Spirit outpacing us and know God has already won the day for LGBT persons and their families.

Bad law must change. The RMN board works without ceasing for the complete removal of all language in the Book of Discipline that condemns homosexual people and limits their participation in the UMC. The "incompatibility clause" must go!

Won't you join us in this critical work and take action today? What is your next step?

EPISCOPAL HOSPITALITY FOR HEARTS ON FIRE

With calls of inhospitality from fellow United Methodists and the presence of the Ku Klux Klan, RMN is especially thankful to those United Methodist bishops practicing Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors that reached out to our eighth national convocation. Hearts on Fire [HOF], the second convocation to be held in the Southeastern Jurisdiction, welcomed fully one third of the HOF participants from the Southeastern Jurisdiction. Along with others who lifted prayers for HOF, we especially thank the 43 Bishops who preached and keynoted, facilitated and participated on the Future with Hope panel, sent notes of greeting and encouragement, and even made donations to Hearts on Fire:

James M. Ault
Monk Bryan
Minerva Carcaño
Ray Chamberlain
Judith Craig
Sudarshana Devadhar
William W. Dew, Jr.
Jesse DeWitt
Sally Dyck
Violet L. Fisher
William Boyd Grove

Susan Hassinger
Robert T. Hoshibata
S. Clifton Ives
Alfred Johnson
Scott Jones
Charles Wesley Jordan
Hee-Soo Jung
Charlene P. Kammerer
Leontyne T. C. Kelly
Deborah L. Kiesey
Calvin D. McConnell

Marshall L. Meadors, Jr.
Jane Allen Middleton
Susan Morrison
Albert Frederick Mutti
Don Ott
Ed Paup
Sharon Zimmerman
Rader
Roy Sano
John Schol
Beverly Shamana

Ann B. Sherer
C. Joseph Sprague
Forrest Stith
Mary Ann Swenson
Melvin Talbert
Jack M. Tuell
Hope Morgan Ward
Melvin E. Wheatley, Jr.
C. Dale White
Richard Wilke
Joseph H. Yeakel

Brief Quotes:

*How delighted I am that you are gathered together, and how grieved I am that I cannot be with you! I know that your time together will be a time of profound affirmation-not just of one another, but affirmation of the best and deepest principles of our faith and our Wesleyan heritage. I affirm you in your ministry to the whole Body of Christ, the church which is living, breathing and growing in Christ's spirit in the world today. **Bishop Mary Ann Swenson***

*As one of the bishops of our church I write to express my personal greetings to those attending the Hearts on Fire Conference at Lake Junaluska. . . I express appreciation to my colleagues in the Council of Bishops who are present. Your presence there represents many of us in the Council who would be with you if it was possible. We are all bishops of the entire church and all of its people, and the presence of a number of bishops represents the pastoral responsibility of all of us. **Bishop William Boyd Grove***

I send the Reconciling Ministries Network my blessings for a productive meeting. Your presence and activity is vital to the continued struggle within the

*United Methodist Church to be a faithful people of God, seeking a more excellent way. **Bishop Charles Wesley Jordan***

I join with you in my thoughts and prayers for the upcoming Convo 2005, "Hearts on Fire!" Retreat at Lake Junaluska, and I believe Convo 2005 Retreat will bring Christ-centered reconciliation and communion in the United



**Back: Sue Laurie, Bishop Schol, Bishop Wilke, Bishop Carcaño, Troy Plummer
Front: Bishop Dyck, Bishop Talbert, Bishop Morrison**

*Methodist Church. I pray that God will lead all of you and bless our church to be holy places of healing and for full inclusion among God's people. **Bishop Hee-Soo Jung***

Welcome to Lake Junaluska and to the Southeastern Jurisdiction of The United

*Methodist Church. It is my prayer that you will be richly blessed as you gather. May the Holy Spirit surround and protect you, enlightening and strengthening you for faithful and compassionate witness. **Bishop Hope Morgan Ward***

The firestorm of mean spirited and hateful letters/e-mail has been discouraging. The fact that the KKK is chiming in links those in our church who also spew hateful messages to any of God's children.

*We pray that no physical violence will erupt. There has already been violence and wounding in the Body of Christ. Blessings on you, brothers and sisters in Christ, each and every one of you. **Bishop Charlene Kammerer***

*May God bless and keep you in gentle peace as others breathe a fire not of the Spirit and harden their hearts against you. Many, including myself, who are not able to be with you are standing with you and praying with you. **Bishop S. Clifton Ives***

The rumors of resistance to your gathering on Labor Day weekend have caused my prayer life to increase in recent weeks! May you know Christ's presence during your days together, and may God go into action to bring the church into greater openness

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EPISCOPAL HOSPITALITY FOR HEARTS ON FIRE (PART 2)

of door, mind and heart. May God stand by all who gather as well as those who provide hospitality during your days at beautiful Lake



Future With Hope: Panel of Bishops at Lake Junaluska

Junaluska. And please know that I stand with you in prayer and caring not only on Labor Day weekend, but during all the other days as well. **Bishop Sharon Zimmerman Rader**

The journey to become a Church that really represents "Open Minds, Open Hearts, Open Doors" is not an easy one. Thanks be to God for those who are willing to take this road, as difficult as it may be. **Bishop Ed Paup**

Peter was afraid of dirty Gentiles but the Holy Spirit set his spirit on fire and it changed the church forever...now even people like us are on the inside. My fervent prayer is that the Holy Spirit will convict some who come to condemn the dirty gay people and set their hearts on fire so they change the church forever so that the outsiders becomes the insiders. And for God's sake, don't lose heart...keep practicing hope and love and be channels of transcendence. **Bishop Ray W. Chamberlain, Jr.**

I am writing to send my personal wishes for a successful and productive gathering at Lake Junaluska, "Hearts on Fire," being planned for this Labor Day weekend. May God bless all God's precious children who gather for this event. God loves you and so do I! **Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar**

Greetings to all of you assembled at Junaluska. I want you to know that you have my encouragement and support as you continue to work toward a totally inclusive United Methodist Church. May you gain spiritual renewal and solidarity as you gather with other United Methodists to pray, sing, reflect, study, and strategize at the convocation. **Bishop William W. Dew, Jr.**

This is to let you know of my encouragement and support of Reconciling Ministries Network and of the upcoming meeting at Lake Junaluska. God bless you. May you have a joyful, productive gathering. **Marshall L Meadors, Jr.**

In light of what has occurred across the church in criticisms over the past weeks, I desired all the more to find a way to be at the Lake and in the crowd of witnesses you will be -- to another way to be Church together. I wanted you to know of my continuing concern and support of your faith and action, your teaching and demonstrating, and especially your persistence in

proclaiming that the table Jesus sets is one where we all have a place -- one where we discover a joy not possible in any lesser company. **Don Ott, A Bishop, with you, seeking a better way**

Please know that the Hearts on Fire conference is in my thoughts and prayers as you gather next week. Your ministry is important. **Bishop Ann B. Sherer**

We will be remembering all of you in our prayers as you gather over the Labor Day weekend. We are committed to an open and inclusive Church. It is difficult for us to understand the hostility of Good News to your right to gather at Lake Junaluska. The Gospel certainly reveals a need to love our neighbors and to be hospitable towards those with whom we are estranged. Your fine and open response to their rejection is a true evidence of a reconciling community and a Christian understanding of God's true love. We will continue to support all of you and pray that you will have a rich spiritual experience in Lake Junaluska. **Bishop Jesse DeWitt**

I want to affirm my colleague Bishops for their presence at your gathering; I offer my support to them and to you, in the cause of total inclusiveness in the United Methodist Church. I do so for the following reasons:

1. As an African American, I know what it means to be excluded, oppressed, discriminated against, and marginalized. Because of so many painful experiences, I would pray no other group of people, anywhere, should experience any degree of pain and suffering.

2. I believe God created all of creation, not just that that matches the image of the majority, but creation that seems to be different. I believe in God's gift of the four leaf clover, the exceptional 7 foot basketball player, the exceptional operatic mezzo soprano, the exceptional nuclear physicist, and those persons who find normal attractions to persons of the same gender.

3. I believe that Jesus Christ is the savior of all humankind and does not differentiate between persons of color, or nation, or gender or sexual orientation. If there had been a reconciling ministries in Galilee, I believe Jesus Christ would have "dwelt among them."

4. I believe that the United Methodist Church is genuinely struggling with many issues around Human Sexuality, but through that struggle will come insights, tolerance, and fuller maturity in Jesus Christ.

Bishop Forrest C. Stith

UMOC STATEMENT - LAKE JUNALUSKA, NC

Our UMOC Pre-convocation gathering for: Reflection on homophobia, racism and colonialism, Personal sharing of our faith journeys, and Communion, was beautifully organized by Youtha Hardman-Cromwell. At that gathering we decided that we needed to put the strong emotions and concerns that surfaced in our conversation about the unwelcoming responses to our presence at Lake Junaluska into writing. Randall Miller collected our views and took the lead in putting together the following statement.

September 26, 2005

As United Methodists of Color for a Fully Inclusive Church (UMOC), a group consisting of Asian American, African American, Hispanic, Native American and Pacific Islander United Methodists, meeting in conjunction with the Reconciling Ministries Network's Convocation at Lake Junaluska Assembly, we raise our voices lest the mistakes of the past be repeated in the present. We are reminded that at not so long ago African Americans were denied entry into this historic site at the heart of Methodism and based on the remembrance of this tragic legacy, we speak out today so that no other individuals or groups will be similarly denied hospitality at Christ's holy table of fellowship.

As UMOC, we are mindful that then as now, more conservative voices from within this Church that we love have sought to deny access and entry to fellow Christians and United Methodists. And we are concerned that then as now acts of inhospitality have opened the door to expressions of extremism and hatred. In particular, we condemn in the strongest possible terms the efforts of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) and of other misguided individuals to intimidate and threaten this gathering of faithful United

Methodists. Again, as UMOC, we are mindful of the campaign of brutality, violence and terror that the KKK has waged from the past down to the immediate present against African Americans, new immigrants, Catholics, Jews, people of differing political perspectives, the federal government, and many, many others.

Now, in recent weeks, the KKK has made it abundantly clear that they have expanded their circle of hatred and terror to include Reconciling United Methodists, particularly those who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people of faith. UMOC utterly rejects the contention that hate-filled groups like the KKK can ever serve as authentic ambassadors of Christ's holy gospel, and we wish to make it abundantly clear to all that gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender United Methodists, their families and those who love and support them are beloved of God and dear brothers and sisters in Christ.

Make no mistake; in this moment and time there can be no equivocation about the ways in which expressions of inhospitality have led to acts of extremism and hatred in the past as well as the present. Keeping in mind Martin Luther King, Jr.'s admonition that all that is necessary for evil to triumph "is for good [people] to do nothing," UMOC calls upon other groups of faithful Christians to denounce the statements and activities of the KKK in regards to this Reconciling Ministries Network Convocation. More specifically, we challenge the more conservative voices within the United Methodist Church to make clear to all their disassociation with such expressions of hatred and fear and to be

at least as vocal in their repudiations of the KKK as they have been in their expressions of public concern about fellow United Methodists meeting to worship, pray and be inspired in this historic place.

We want to offer our deepest appreciation to the SEJ Administrative Offices, the Lake Junaluska Assembly Staff, residents, and security personnel who have worked so hard to make us feel both welcome and safe in this place. We are truly grateful for their efforts. We also give thanks for those Bishops and many other United Methodists, who have brought or sent greetings to this gathering. We are immeasurably strengthened and humbled by your love and support.

As UMOC, we are well aware that the struggle for true equality is not over, even within Christ's Church. In the months and years of challenge and hope that lie before us, we are particularly heartened and encouraged by the examples

offered by the lives of Chief Junaluska, Sojourner Truth, Bayard Rustin, Fannie Lou Hamer, Cesar Chavez, and many, many others. And thus, surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, "let us run with perseverance the course that is set before us" (Heb. 12:1b).



Randy Miller

For more information about United Methodists of Color for a Fully Inclusive Church, you may contact its current Conveners:

Rev. Gil Caldwell,
CaldwellChurch@aol.com

Rev. Dr. Traci West,
twest@drew.edu

PILGRIMAGE: HEARTS ON FIRE!

- As the first act of worship together when we gathered on Friday, Hearts On Fire lifted up in prayer those affected by Hurricane Katrina. More than praying, we also took up an offering of \$14,340.31 that has been forwarded by the Reconciling Ministries Network to UMCOR-Hurricane Relief. Special emphasis was given to the loss of Gulfside - the unique place of hospitality for African Americans during the time of the Central Jurisdictional Conference of the UMC. Also related: RMN will coordinate mission teams through UM Volunteers In Mission to send to New Orleans when the time is right for such teams to begin work. Please forward your interest and experience in participating in a mission team next year to troy@rmnetwork.org.

- Exciting worship, coordinated by Heather Elkins, and challenging preaching began each day following the accounts of Elijah-Elisha. Rev. Beth Stroud challenged those gathered to look past the noise and engage the silence and to listen for God's will. Bishop Minerva Carcaño proclaimed there is room at the foot of the cross for all of us. Rev. Margaret Mallory encouraged participants to "take the dare" and pick up the mantle for justice. Rev. James Preston searched through our own failings as the UMC and as Reconcilers confessing our crises and motivating us to be evangelical. Rev. Dr. Karen Oliveto explored the message of the book of Acts for our community. Bishop Richard Wilke delivered a keynote address on the Jerusalem Council of Acts Chapter 15.

-Words of encouragement and welcome to Hearts on Fire were received by local residents of Lake Junaluska, Waynesville, North Carolina and the US including 42 from UM Bishops.



Jimmy Carr Greets HOF



Exciting Worship



Jorge Lockward hosts Miracle Moments



Dr. Mallory: "Take the Dare!"



Vicki Woods Breaking Bread



My Yoke Is Easy



Bishop Wilke with the Word



Concert: Jason & Mom Duet



Receiving the Mantle

Jimmy Carr received an overwhelming standing ovation as he extended greetings from the Lake Junaluska staff.

- Music flowed through the event with Mark Miller and band in worship, mountain music from the Sugar Camp String Band for the ice cream social, cabaret with Cassandra Marsh for Affirmation's 30th anniversary, and a concert by Jason and deMarco.

- Generosity continued to flow with an offering of \$30,100 for the continued ministry of Reconciling Ministries Network as Randy Miller invited us to keep being an organization that saves peoples lives.

- Participants were on the edge of their seats for the historic Future With Hope panel of Bishops and the following Listening Posts including testimony from Hearts on Fire participants. Bishops Carcaño, Dyck, Jones, Morrison, Schol and Talbert offered diverse perspectives and a unique glimpse into the interaction between bishops and reconciling efforts.

-Exciting workshops and overflowing forums engaged evangelism, bible study, sacraments, marriage, racism, forgiveness, healthy relationships, servant leadership, nonviolence, and global music. Affinity gatherings both supported and educated allies, transgender persons, persons of color, and persons in the coming out process as individuals or communities.

-Parents trained annual conference coordinators and gifted rainbow stoles. Clergy balanced action plans for safe sanctuary and justice work. United Methodists of Color spoke truth to hate groups. MOSAIC hosted a lodge full of students for activities and worship.

Katalyst Hearts on Fire Photos taken by Ivan Lo and Dawn Hand.



The Band: Spirit Singing



Oliveto: Heart-felt Bible Study



ASL Flying Fingers



Processing the Light

AWARDS GIVEN AT HEARTS ON FIRE

The Cup of Justice and *Voice in the Wilderness* awards were initiated by the RMN board of directors at the 2001 convocation in Tacoma and continued at the 2003 WOW Conference in Philadelphia. In 2005, the awards were announced at Hearts on Fire at Lake Junaluska. Each of the award recipients receive a chalice and paten set created with the "silt" of Lake Junaluska and used in the closing communion service at Hearts on Fire.

The Voice in the Wilderness Award is for taking risks, despite isolation in a wilderness, to proclaim the rightness of inclusion for all people in the church, and for standing against injustice despite that lack of support. RMN honored Elsie Vega with the Voice in the Wilderness award.



Elsie Vega, lay person, Spearfish, South Dakota.

Coming out as a lesbian at 76 years old, Elsie is a grandmother of six and a faithful member of the Spearfish United Methodist Church. Elsie convinced her UMW group to cut, sew and iron 27 rainbow-patterned stoles to witness for inclusion at the Dakotas Annual Conference. Elsie has signed up dozens of South Dakota persons as Reconciling United Methodists. On the discriminatory language in the Book of Discipline, she says "If they put in a lie, they can certainly take it out again. Why am I living, if

not to address this extremely grave error in Christian teaching?" Elsie testified before the South Dakota legislature, "Two adults who love each other should have a right to marry. You don't need to know or try to figure out why I love the woman I love or why she would love me. You don't need to figure that out or worry your minds about it."

Also recognized as wilderness voices from Texas and Michigan were:



Jim Bankston
Texas Annual Conference Delegate, pastor, St. Paul's

UMC, Houston, Texas.

Rev. Bankston was the only Texas delegate to stand, among a sea of sitting Texans, during the River of Life procession at General Conference 2004 in Pittsburgh. He advocates for inclusion both in quiet networking, public speaking, and hosting panels for UM churches. Jim led the Breaking the Silence Panel attended by over 200 persons at the beginning of the Texas Annual Conference in 2005. He consistently speaks out with a moderate voice that "this discrimination is just not right."



Megan Kelly, lay person, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Local reporters documented the story when Megan Kelly, 13 years old, committed to stay involved with her local church, and explained to the congregation that she could not join the wider denomination.

Megan told her church that she believed "Jesus would not turn his back on gay people." Her decision resulted from actions at the United Methodist Church General Conference maintaining discriminatory language against gay and lesbian persons. "I don't understand this, nor can I in good conscience support this."

The Cup of Justice Award is for taking bold action to invoke justice where injustice, oppression, and exclusion exist. RMN honored the **Retired Reconciling Clergy of the New England Annual Conference** with the Cup of Justice Award.

This remarkable group of retired clergy makes public statements and takes action in support of gay marriage. Members of the group have officiated at same gender marriages and have also made a covenant with one another to all stand for trial together should any individual be brought up on charges. "If one gets charged, we all get charged." These activists have lobbied, paid for advertisements, and recruited support against any limiting marriage amendment in Massachusetts. They also make a practice of individually inviting every new cler-

gy retiree to become part of the group. This particular retired clergy group has already fostered retired clergy groups in other Annual Conferences.



Also affirmed as unique champions of justice was **First United Methodist Church of Germantown (FUMCOG)**, Philadelphia, PA. FUMCOG for their longtime reconciling presence and witness for justice along with their vulnerability to be the church in front of cameras while going through difficult transitions in "The Congregation." And also for their unflagging support for an out lesbian clergywoman, Beth Stroud, which has included presence at the trial and appeal, commitment to Beth's employment as a minister regardless of the trial outcome, and distribution of proud rainbow "Beth is my pastor" badges to wear in support and protest.

The following people gave money to support Hearts on Fire and were not included in the program book. Thank you for your support!

Saint

Anonymous
Anonymous
Anonymous
Julie Bruno & Sue Laurie
Jimmy & Joy Carr
God & Mom
John
Jeanne Audrey Powers
Lyta Seddig
Beth Stroud

Giver

Rev. Bob & Lisa Campbell
Frank P. & Patricia B. Edwards
Frank Staggs
"From the Wilderness"
Paul & Carinne Van Buren
"From the Wilderness"
Jon Lindberg
Lynne Josselyn
"From the Wilderness"
Auburndale Parish

RECONCILING OUTREACH

RMN Co-Sponsors Ecumenical Core Team Leadership Training
December 1-4, 2005, Community of Christ Temple
1001 W. Walnut
Independence, MO 64050

Co-Sponsors and Presenters:

RMN, Susan Laurie, Outreach Coordinator

Reconciling in Christ Program (Lutherans), Emily Eastwood, Executive Director

Welcoming Community Network (Community of Christ), Sharon Troyer, GALA National Field Coordinator

What is it?: Core Team Leadership Training is an intense 3+ day hands-on workshop beginning 4:00 p.m., Thursday, December 1 and ending at 3:00 pm on Sunday, December 4. It is intended to give participants the skill set and knowledge base to build local or regional teams equipped to work effectively to foster the expansion of the Welcoming Programs.

Register online at:

<http://www.lcna.org/rictraining.shtm>.

Registration closes November 24, 2005.

Much more information: see the RMN website <http://rmnetwork.org/events.php> and/or contact sue@rmnetwork.org.

A coalition of progressive United Methodist groups in the California-Nevada Annual Conference including the Committee on Reconciliation, MFSA and Reconciling Ministries Clergy presents:

"Proclaiming the Whole Gospel"

Campbell United Methodist Church - Campbell, CA

Friday January 13th 2006

7:30PM thru 9:30PM

Saturday January 14th 2006

9:30AM thru 3:30PM

Leaders include: *Janet Wolf, Gil Caldwell, Jimmy Creech, Mike Farrell, Troy Plummer, Donna Fado Ivery*

Worship and Song with Jim and Jean Strathdee

Local hotel accommodations at reasonable rates and child care during the event are planned. Dinner on Friday night and lunch on Saturday provided by the Campbell Church. Event cost

and further details will be made available at

www.thewholegospel.net

Contact: John Davenport

(707) 545-3663

johndaven@sbcglobal.net

"We Are Family" 2006

Pacific Northwest Reconciling Gathering

Sunday, Feb. 12, 2006, will be the fourth annual PNW-RMN Gathering. Observing the theme, "We Are Family", lay and clergy from the Pacific Northwest Conference will gather for study, worship, and fellowship.

Keynoter will be Stephanie Coontz, nationally known author and expert in family studies. Currently an instructor at The Evergreen State College, Coontz has served as the Director of Research and Public Education for the Council on Contemporary Families.

SHOWER OF STOLES: THANKS, RMN, ON OUR 10TH ANNIVERSARY!

September 16 marks the tenth anniversary of the Shower of Stoles Project. The Reconciling Ministries Network holds a very significant place in our history. We received our first United Methodist stole in 1996. Today United Methodists continue to represent over one quarter of the Shower of Stoles Collection, and about one third of the 150 to 200 displays we do each year.

We thank you, RMN, for partnering with the Shower of Stoles Project as we labor to build a church where people of all sexual orientations and gender identities are welcome. Thanks to the dozens of Reconciling Congregations that have worked so closely with us over the years, and thanks to the hundreds of Reconciling United Methodists that have supported us in our common mission. We will continue to stand with you, work with you, and pray with you until the day that all of God's children are welcome!

Blessings and peace, my friends!

Martha Juillerat

National Program Director

No Longer Anonymous--At Hearts On Fire, Beth Stroud added her name to a stole she had previously donated anonymously. She added her name and the story of trusting God through charges, trial, and appeal.



Martha and Beth

PARENTS RECONCILING NETWORK

Sixty parents, representing 18 states, attended the PRN Pre-Convo workshop at Lake Junaluska. We had a wonderful day together, and the key ingredient in that success was the enthusiasm and dedication of the participants. Sharing with other parents who are on this journey is exciting and uplifting. We came away from that day more committed, motivated, and well-equipped to continue on this road toward full inclusion for our church.



The workshop, *"Sharpening Our Leadership Tools,"* provided methods, materials, and practical ideas which each person could take home and put to work immediately in building our grassroots network. Included were presentations on the *"Two Feet of Compassion,"* *"Claiming the Promise"* bible study, along with resources for education and advocacy and guidelines for forming support groups in the local church.

John and Linda Lewis led us in a spirit-filled worship experience and Sue Laurie shared the inspirational story of how her early church experiences sustain and empower her as she continues on her journey of faith. Perhaps the most rewarding and moving part of our time together was being able to share, without need for explanation or apology, in the joy of worship and fellowship that is fully inclusive, which is so meaningful to those among us who are commonly denied that freedom.

RECONCILING MINISTRIES CLERGY

Over 70 participants from across the United States and Puerto Rico met at Lake Junaluska for two days of pre-convocation! David Meredith serves the group as convener, Franklin Dotts as hospitality coordinator, and David Aslesen as the RMClergy representative to the RMN Board.

The group noted the work accomplished over the last several months, celebrated the growth of the movement, enjoyed worship together and offered times for sharing and building connections. A time of discernment and reflection was held on marriage. RMClergy seek continued thoughts and experience in this area; a draft statement will be produced soon.

Reflection and strategic planning were organized through five work areas:

"Expanding the Movement - Connecting with Clergy and Retired Clergy Outreach" facilitated by Tiffany Steinwert and Bob Davis.

"Critical and Emerging Issues" facilitated by Gayle Felton and David Aslesen.

"Alternative Approaches to Trials and Penalties" facilitated by April Hall Cutting and Vivian Waltz.

"Gatherings, Events and Development" facilitated by Margo Tenold and Scott Campbell.

"Care and Support of Reconciling Clergy" facilitated by Chip Aldridge.

Join the group and sign up to receive updates by contacting rmc@yahoogroups.com.

FUTURE MEETINGS:

February 23-24, 2006 Fort Worth, TX

August 17-18, 2006 in Chicago, IL

April 11-12, 2007 in Washington, D.C.

To read the full report of this meeting go to the RMC webpage: www.rmnetwork.org/rmc.

MOAIC: METHODIST STUDENTS & SEMINARIANS

When over 560 Reconciling United Methodists gathered over Labor Day weekend at Lake Junaluska for "Hearts on Fire," over 50 were students and seminarians from across the United States committed to making disciples and transforming the world. Over 20 students lodged together in a house sponsored by MOAIC: Methodist Students for an All-Inclusive Church.

The importance of "Hearts on Fire," much like the success of the Church, is not in the number of participants, but in the lives that were transformed.

One college student from Iowa called the convocation a "major turning point in his life" because he was able to see his place in the church as both gay and Christian. A seminarian from California said that "Hearts on Fire," not only "prepared us to go out to transform the world; it transformed our inner beings..." Another seminarian from Washington, DC recognized the importance of discipleship in his life and invited others to join a covenant group.

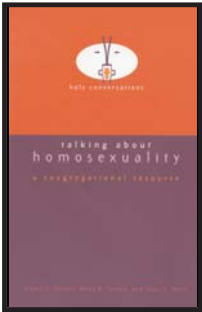


The MOAIC Strategic Planning Team met in Houston, Texas on October 28-29 to talk about the structure of the Planning Team, development opportunities, and our communications plan. If you are interested in future leadership please email Chett Pritchett at chettpritchett@peoplepc.com.

We are United Methodist students, seminarians and young adults of all sexual orientations and gender identities making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world!

NEW RESOURCES!

HOLY CONVERSATIONS: TALKING ABOUT HOMOSEXUALITY



The Reconciling Ministries celebrates the creative collaboration of three RMN board alumni! This new resource for theological reflection on homosexuality serves as a tool for people in churches who feel they are surrounded by painful, confusing debates in the church about homosexuality, and want to discover how the Christian tradition can be a constructive-rather than divisive-resource.

Description: *Over six sessions, through conversation, study and exercises participants reflect on their Christian beliefs and personal experiences guided by the categories of the Wesleyan quadrilateral: scripture, tradition, experience, and reason. Includes a facilitator's guide with suggestions for how to conduct group discussions along with entertaining exercises to stimulate creative approaches to spiritual growth. Available through RMN.*

Holy Conversations: Talking about Homosexuality, A Congregational Resource by Karen P. Oliveto, Kelly D. Turney, and Traci C. West

(Pilgrim Press, 2005)

\$13.00

HANDOUT: TWO FEET OF COMPASSION

Many Christian communities and individuals identify easily with acts of mercy yet fail to see justice as a demand of the gospel. This "Two Feet of Christian Compassion" resource adapted for an LGBT focus was created to help connect the sister components of compassion: mercy and justice. This four-page handout is now downloadable at

<http://www.rmnetwork.org/resources/compassion.pdf> .

The "Two Feet of Christian Compassion" can be used in a four-session or one-session format.

DVD: COMING OUT-COMING IN

This film is a 32-minute documentary that gives voice to gay and lesbian Christians struggling to reconcile faith with sexual orientation. The interview subjects of dedicated Christians of all ages and walks of life take viewers beyond the current debate in churches about homosexuality to reveal the everyday efforts of faithful people. While filmed throughout North Carolina, a majority of participants were interviewed in Charlotte. Coming Out ~ Coming In is offered as a vehicle to start new and meaningful conversations among people who do not always agree.

Reconciling pastor Rev. Laurie Hays Coffman says, "If you want to purchase your own DVD with Study Guide (\$30), let me know. I believe this approach to shared wisdom can benefit our churches. Thanks for your support and rejoicing with me in this significant three-year-long endeavor!" For more information:

<http://www.minnowmedia.net/intheworks/coci.html>.

Worship, Bible Study and the Bishop's Plenary are available for viewing by ordering the **HEARTS ON FIRE DVDS**.

Hear the preaching of Beth Stroud, Bishop Minerva Carcaño, Rev. Margaret Mallory and James Preston. Learn from the Bible Study on the Book of Acts prepared by Rev. Karen Oliveto and Rev. Jeffrey Kuan. Witness the Bishops' Plenary as they offered a "Future with Hope."



**LAKE JUNALUSKA
LABOR DAY 2005**

Description	Price	Quantity	Total
#1 Worship Friday & Saturday <i>Beth Stroud & Minerva Carcano</i>	\$20.00		
#2 Worship Sunday & Monday <i>Margaret Mallory & James Preston</i>	\$20.00		
#3 Bible Studies [All four] <i>Jeffrey Kuan & Karen Oliveto</i>	\$20.00		
#4 Bishop's Plenary <i>Saturday Afternoon</i>	\$20.00		
#5 All 4 DVDs	\$75.00		
[Please see my contact and payment information on reverse!]		Merchandise Total	
		Shipping	\$5.00
		TOTAL	\$



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Together, we **DO** make a difference! I want to step out in faith by making a financial commitment of \$ _____ to the Reconciling Ministries Network.

Please see my DVD order on the back of this form in the amount of \$ _____.

I will send a check. My check is enclosed.

I prefer to charge my pledge to my Mastercard, Visa or American Express card.

Card Name _____

Card Number _____ exp. _____

Please contact me about setting up an Automatic Monthly Bank Transfer [EFT].

I prefer to send a check each month or quarter. Please send me reminders.

Name _____ Clergy

Address _____

City/ State/ Zip _____

Home Phone / Cell Phone _____

Email _____

Sign me up for RMN's weekly email digest! Please do not list my name in RMN's Annual Report of givers.

Sign me up as a new Reconciling United Methodist! This is a new address or a correction.

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