

4 STEPS TO AFFILIATE WITH THE RECONCILING MOVEMENT

INTRODUCTION

There are three types of Reconciling groups, each requiring a slightly different process and group of decision makers.

- 1. Reconciling Church:** an entire congregation votes to adopt a statement of affirmation and affiliate with Reconciling Ministries Network (RMN).
- 2. Reconciling Community:** a small group such as a Sunday school class, youth group, UMW Circle, music ministry, camping ministry, etc. In some churches, a new group is formed specifically to become a Reconciling Community. The entire group votes and is making the decision only for the group, not beyond. Church members who are not part of this group do not participate in the vote.
- 3. Reconciling Campus Ministry:** a campus ministry vote typically includes student members and leaders, staff, and the Ministry Board. It is up to each campus ministry to determine who should vote, but the general rule is the more people involved the better.

Congregations, communities, and campus ministries who affiliate with RMN embrace RMN's commitment to achieving LGBTQ justice and full inclusion in the life and ministry of the United Methodist Church, both in policy and in practice. They engage in the ministry of Reconciliation in two ways:

1. Outreach, welcome, and intersectional ministry with and for LGBTQ persons in the local setting.
2. Creating opportunities to engage in dialogue, build relationships, and advocating for the necessary changes to Church policies related to ordination equality, marriage equality, and the availability of funds that help make justice a reality.

In preparation for a vote to affiliate, RMN recommends a lay-led, relationship-based model for engaging in intentional conversation, study, and discernment.

STEP 1: CRAFT & ADOPT A STATEMENT THAT AFFIRMS LGBTQ PERSONS

While a ministry of Reconciliation includes an intersectional approach to justice and inclusion, the basic requirement to affiliate with RMN is a public statement that clearly and boldly welcomes and affirms people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. Because the Book of Discipline singles out lesbian and gay persons for harm, and because RMN is committed to ensuring that bisexual, gender-expansive, and transgender persons are equally valued and included, it is critical that each statement not only welcomes but explicitly affirms people of "all sexual orientations and gender identities."

EXAMPLES

Minimum Required language: "The Wesley Sunday School Class welcomes and affirms people of all sexual orientations and gender identities."

Recommended language: "The Wesley Sunday School Class welcomes and celebrates people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions."

Reconciling statements can name additional people groups. People of all sexual orientations and gender identities are the minimum requirement. Your Regional Organizer is happy to review your statement to ensure that it meets the minimum requirements for affiliation. Choose language that avoids a gender binary, such as "siblings" instead of "brothers and sisters." In addition to the required or recommended language, we encourage unique statements that name who you are and what you value as a church or community.

Sample statements can be viewed [here](#) or obtained from your Regional Organizer. Once adopted by a vote (we require a



minimum of 75% support), Reconciling statements from congregations should be typed on church letterhead (Communities may not have letterhead).

Statements can be signed by whomever is most appropriate for the Reconciling group: pastor, lay leader, Council chair, Sunday school teacher, UMW President, or the signatures of your entire community. Please save your statement **as a .doc or .docx file** and email it to your Regional Organizer along with the [New Reconciling Community Form](#) and photo.

STEP 2: COMPLETE THE NEW RECONCILING COMMUNITY FORM

The [New Reconciling Community Form](#) collects basic information about your church or community, and contact information for the one person you choose as your primary contact. Along with your Reconciling statement and photo, this form will be sent to your Regional Organizer and become part of your RMN record. (The best method is to download the form, save it to your computer, fill it out, save it again, and send it back as an email attachment.)

The primary contact (should be a lay person) listed on the New Reconciling Community Form *must* be registered as a Reconciling United Methodist (RUM). [Register here!](#)

STEP 3: TAKE A HIGH-RESOLUTION PHOTO

A photo will accompany your Reconciling statement and New Reconciling Community Form in RMN records. It will also be shared as part of the announcement and celebration on social media. Cell phones take great high-resolution photos, so feel free to use them. Small groups of smiling faces, class members signing their statement, congregations gathered on the sanctuary chancel, or your outdoor sign all make great photos. Be creative! Landscape/horizontal photos preferred.

STEP 4: SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION & STAY IN TOUCH

WHAT TO EMAIL TO YOUR REGIONAL ORGANIZER

1. Your adopted Reconciling statement
2. Your completed [New Reconciling Community Form](#)
3. A high-resolution photo of your congregation or community

ADDITIONAL (BUT NOT REQUIRED) STEPS:

REGISTER NEW RECONCILING UNITED METHODISTS

Holding a Reconciling United Methodist (RUM) drive invites everyone in your community to become a RUM and receive important communication from the larger connection. [Online registration](#) is quick, easy, and most efficient.

[RUM cards](#) are available for download on the RMN website. Any new RUM cards completed by individual members should be entered by a volunteer from your group/church in our [online RUM form](#). Any [RUM cards](#) completed by individual members should be entered by a volunteer from your group/church using the [online RUM sign-up page](#). Please strive to ensure that at least 50% of your group has signed up.

GIVE TO SUPPORT THE MOVEMENT

Just as we give to our local church with our prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness, we invite you to [do the same with RMN](#). It is from the generosity of those who believe in LGBTQ justice and inclusion that we are able to provide training events, travel to annual conferences, witness at UM gatherings, and organize for change at General and Jurisdictional conferences.

Many communities give \$250/year and congregations may give \$1,000/year - some more, some less. Churches and communities can raise these gifts in various ways including a special offering, fundraisers, or a line item in their budget. Many keep the annual tradition of celebrating their anniversary of voting to affiliate with RMN by holding an anniversary worship service that includes a special offering. RMN receives no money from The UMC. Our financial support comes solely from churches, communities, individuals, and charitable foundations.

Your financial gift can be [made online](#) or mailed to:

Reconciling Ministries Network | 123 W. Madison St., Suite 1450 | Chicago, IL 60602

KEEP YOUR WELCOMING STATEMENT VISIBLE

Most Reconciling Congregations print their statement in the Sunday bulletin, on the main page of their website, and in their Facebook “about us” section as part of their ongoing welcome. Your welcoming statement can also be displayed on bulletin boards or other places where first-time visitors would likely see it. Consider newsletters, outdoor signs, and letterhead.

Seek opportunities in your community to share your commitment to inclusion – participate in pride festivals, local UM gatherings, and organizing by local LGBTQ organizations. Think of it as placing your “welcome mat” on the outside of the building, not just the inside.



CONTACT US

For more information or support, please contact your Regional Organizer.

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