

# Top 10 Reasons to Affiliate with Reconciling Ministries Network

**1. Extend God's fully inclusive love and unconditional welcome - inviting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) people into affirming spaces in which all can worship, serve, and find a faith community.**

All are God's children and ours is Christ's Church. Jesus intentionally welcomed all and, as followers of Jesus, so should we. Our United Methodist Book of Discipline proclaims that "all persons are of sacred worth" and that "we commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons."

**2. Challenge the default that The UMC is anti-LGBT and clarify the position of your ministry. Make your position clear on LGBTQ justice and inclusion set apart from the denomination as a whole.**

While very few United Methodists read the Book of Discipline, citizens of the world, United Methodists or not, are aware of the UMC's harmful denominational policy regarding LGBTQ equality. The absence of a clear statement to the contrary leads people to believe that we and our local churches endorse these policies that target and discriminate against LGBTQ people. If we don't say otherwise, it's assumed that we agree. Even if unintentional, this is a message we can't afford to send. Reconciling United Methodists, and Reconciling Churches, Communities, and Campuses are a light to shine brightly throughout the connection. Convey to your community that you are a different kind of church.

**3. Help your current neighbors, new residents, and out of town guests find you.**

RMN connects people and churches. Being listed in the RMN registry of inclusive churches is important. It allows prospective visitors to find Reconciling Churches and Communities by state and is widely used. Because of the harm the institutional Church has done to LGBTQ persons, visiting a church is a risk that requires courage. No matter how welcoming and affirming a church may be on the inside, LGBTQ friends will never experience that affirmation if it's not first expressed through an intentional, *outward* invitation. We place our welcome mats on the outside of the building, not just the inside.

**4. Build and strengthen relationships within your church family.**

The Reconciling process takes seriously the fundamental importance of relationships. The wholeness God envisions is unrealizable where human relationships remain broken. We can help overcome separation and find wholeness in these meaningful conversations that lead to affiliating with RMN.

**5. Increase momentum in the local and national Reconciling movement to reflect our connectional nature and covenant.**

Our heritage of connectionalism teaches us that we are stronger together than apart. Affiliating with RMN provides strength in resources, community, and momentum. It multiplies the love and advocacy for LGBTQ justice. Taking this step of affiliation often inspires neighboring congregations and communities to engage in their own conversations resulting in more and more welcoming and affirming spaces for LGBTQ United Methodists.

**6. Take up the Ministry of Reconciliation.**

The ministry of Reconciliation is fulfilled when congregations move beyond "welcoming" to "advocating," beyond "accepting" to "transforming," and beyond "standing with" to "standing as."

**7. Live out your Wesleyan heritage of evangelism.**

Founder John Wesley said, "there is no holiness but social holiness" and instilled in us a responsibility to spread social holiness throughout the land, not as enforcers of a code but as grateful and generous agents of God's inclusive love and transforming grace.

**8. Live out our global mission statement to "make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."**

In our affiliation with RMN we bear witness to the most identifiable characteristic of Jesus' disciples - love, and we seek first the kin-dom of God.

**9. Fulfill your baptismal covenant by accepting the freedom and power God gives "to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves."**

One way we fulfill our baptismal covenant is by publicly resisting un-Christ-like policies and standing in solidarity with marginalized people. It is critical that we speak out against discrimination as being incompatible with God's love for all people.

**10. Live as disciples of Christ who modeled and called us to love and to serve, most especially those pushed to the margins.**

"Love your neighbor as yourself." "Now go and do likewise."