

Reconciling Core Team Report to CUMC Church Council

April 13, 2016

In 2005 a lay member of the congregation, Nancy Schroeder, asked the church conference to affirm the congregation's stance on sexual inclusiveness. The following year, the Administrative Board adopted what is currently our church welcoming vision statement, developed under the leadership of Dale Zimmerman. In the summer of 2014, Church Council invited a core team to explore what it would mean for CUMC to formally identify itself as a Reconciling Congregation. Members of the congregation were invited to be on the team, and those who accepted have been working faithfully to reach this point. During the past year and a half, the Reconciling Core Team has been exploring more about and educating the church regarding what it means to be a Reconciling Congregation within The United Methodist Church. Based on survey responses gathered after last year's All Church Conference, listening sessions were held to allow congregants to pose questions about what it would mean to become a Reconciling Congregation. We also hosted two guest preachers, Rev. Bonnie Beckonchrist with Reconciling Ministries Network and Bishop Sharon Zimmerman Rader, who both spoke about their experiences in guiding congregations through reconciling processes, as well as meeting over luncheons to speak informally with CUMC members.

As those sessions were reviewed by the Team, we decided to continue an educational process through 2015 and into 2016. This process gave everyone the opportunity to learn about our local congregation and its place in the Northern Illinois Conference, the wider United Methodist Church, and the world regarding full inclusion. To those ends, we formally commissioned the members of the Core Team as resources for the congregation, identified through rainbow scarves that they wear when at church. We also created a small collection of books related LGBTQ+ themes, available for checkout from the CUMC library. The Core Team also invited members of area Reconciling Congregations as guest speakers in Adult Sunday School classes. Finally, we have created an LGBTQ+ Frequently Asked Questions webpage on the CUMC website.

We have held several events incorporated into the church seasons to help in this educational process. During Advent, our Pastors sponsored three weeks of movie nights, culminating in a fourth week with special guest speaker Dennis [REDACTED]. Throughout the Lenten season, we worked together as a congregation to design a new CUMC logo that reflects welcome and inclusion. Additionally, another design was identified that will be used for the creation of a new banner to hang in the Sanctuary, both to be used should we vote to become a Reconciling Congregation and pending the approval of Church Council. Also during Lent, we recalled ways we have colluded with unjust systems and language, looking instead toward a time of affirmation and issuing a call to action as a community of faith in our new beginnings.

At this time, the members of the Reconciling Core Team believe that our work is done and we believe the church is ready to vote.. We are requesting that this council take action to determine when/how the vote will take place and consider our logo submission for approval.

Respectfully submitted,

CUMC Reconciling Core Team

Proposed Logo Design



Proposed Banner Design

