

Lawrence First United Methodist Church  
MOVING FORWARD  
Where do we stand?

First United Methodist Church is part of the Reconciling Ministries Network. As a Reconciling congregation, we confirm our baptismal commitment to resist evil and injustice in every form they present themselves; that just as the sacrament of Baptism is freely extended to infants and their families as well as confirmands and confirming adults, so also should the sacrament of marriage be open to all couples desiring that the marriage blessing be held in our sanctuaries with clergy who choose to officiate.

**What does it mean to be a congregation in the Reconciling Ministries Network (RMN)?** The core principles stated by the RMN include a commitment to the justice imperative of the Gospel to end oppression. Reconciling congregations are committed to policy change that create full inclusion. This means RMN works for full equality in membership, ordination, and marriage for God's lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender children. (See a description of all of the core principles on the next page.)

**Background:** In 2008, First United Methodist Church became part of the Reconciling Ministries Network. This process started in 2006 and included numerous opportunities for the congregation to become more informed and give input regarding full inclusion of the LGBTQ community in our church. As a result, the Administrative Board approved becoming a Reconciling congregation.

Since FUMC became part of the Reconciling Ministries Network, there have been vast cultural shifts towards acceptance and inclusion within the United States. Same sex marriage is now legal. More and more mainline churches perform same sex marriages and ordain gay clergy. However, the United Methodist Church has not approved systemic policy changes for full inclusion of the LGBTQ community. This has resulted in the current concern about the future direction of the United Methodist Church.

As a Reconciling congregation, a statement of inclusion was developed and adopted by our Church to confirm our belief in full inclusion.



Believing that all people are unique and beloved children of God, Lawrence First United Methodist Church affirms that all persons, without exception, are welcome to participate fully in the life of our congregation.