



Our Vision: A Church that is truly for all.

Want to Become a Reconciling Congregation? Here's How!

If your church is looking to declare its commitment to LGBTQIA+ inclusion in the UMC by joining the Reconciling Ministries Network (RMN), an upcoming event in Downers Grove may be helpful! The event on Saturday, November 4, is for folks who want to "Learn how to become a Reconciling Congregation." [Visit this webpage](#) for more details and to register for the gathering.

A Note on Hearing of Recent Misinformation

Friends and colleagues,

It has been brought to our attention that there have been letters sent from people associated with an already disaffiliated church (Decatur Grace) to existing UM Churches. This letter offers the assistance of their lawyers and claims to be able to bypass the conference system.

No one can bypass the system as explained in paragraph 2553, and to try to do so through the civic courts would lead to more undue harm than any good that would be available. This letter campaign is causing confusion and anxiety in spaces it need not and is not shared in a way that furthers the work of any church.

If you are experiencing this or another similar stressor, please know that we are here for you. You and your congregation are not alone. We hold you in prayer and stand ready to be there in support with whatever actions we can.

[Need someone to talk to your church? Click on this box to email us!](#)

We have people who are willing and ready to talk to your church if there are talks of disaffiliation going on. Let us know if we can help!

Weekly Devotional: Romans 13:8-14

from Rev. Robb McCoy

Many commentators have said that we should read Paul through the lens of Jesus, not Jesus through the lens of Paul. In other words, when the Gospels and Paul's letters seem to diverge from their focus and theme, it should be the words, actions, and message of Jesus that should inform how we read Paul. Not the other way around.

This is an essential concept for those who advocate for LGBTQ+ inclusion in the church because most of the Biblical reasoning for exclusion comes from the letters of Paul, not from Jesus. This isn't to say that Paul's words are dismissed. Many Christians who claim the term "orthodox" in regards to LGBTQ+ inclusion make the accusation that progressives "cherry-pick" the Scriptures. I myself have been accused of treating the Bible like a buffet – take what you want and ignore the parts you don't like.

Yet Paul himself does it. The letter to the Romans is long and argumentative. It is full of logical turns, rhetorical devices, and elaborate metaphors. It is arguably Paul's greatest work and the most influential book of the Bible, shaping and inspiring important thinkers and Church reformers like Martin Luther and our own John Wesley.

Here, as Paul approaches the end of his letter, he goes back to Jesus. All of his arguments, explanations, and theology are summed up in the same way Jesus sums up the Law and the Prophets: "You must love your neighbor as yourself." Paul himself is putting the lens of Jesus over his entire letter, and then he goes a step further to explain this in verse ten: "Love doesn't do anything wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is what fulfills the Law."

There are many parts of Paul's writings with which we may struggle. There are nuances, details, and intricacies in his letters that are worth examining and debating. Yet Paul himself boils it all down to this: "Love each other." In

his first letter to the Corinthians, he famously describes what that means. “Love is patient, love is kind,” he begins in verse 4 of chapter 13. “Love does not delight in evil but rejoices in the truth” (v. 6).

We who advocate for LGBTQ+ inclusion delight in the truth that is created in each person. Their truth of who they love, how they express their gender, and how they express love in the world. We read Paul through the lens of Jesus because, in the end, Paul does the same thing. Love one another. Love their truth, and live out loud and open in the light of day.

IGRC for Unity

