

An Open Letter to the Congregation: Starting a Reconciling Conversation

Dear First Church Family,

May 5, 2022

Last November, the Reconciling Ministries Core Committee was formed to develop a process to help our church discern whether it wishes to become a member of the Reconciling Ministries Network (RMN). At its heart, a Reconciling Ministry is one that adopts a public statement developed by the RMN (found on the webpage <https://rmnetwork.org/get-involved/reconciling-ministry/>), which is inclusive of all marginalized people, but specifically welcomes persons of the LGBTQIA+ community. More about the Reconciling Ministries Network may be found at www.rmnetwork.org. Having received the approval of the Church Council, this letter begins a period of discernment and dialogue, in which our congregation will engage in holy conversations around the issue of homosexuality and the church.

We recognize that each of us enters this conversation with different points of view. Over the next several months, the Committee will plan and provide a variety of opportunities for prayer, discussion, and education, with an emphasis on creating safe spaces for all voices in the congregation to speak and share their personal stories. We will use First Things, Sunday Announcements, and the FUMCOR website to announce upcoming events. Everyone is invited to participate in this process of learning, listening, and sharing, while being understanding and respectful of one another. For parents receiving this letter, youth are invited to participate fully in this process with your permission.

For many years this church has embraced the idea of opening our doors to all as stated in our welcoming statement. The reconciling discernment process carries forward the spirit of our commitment to welcoming and affirming as another step in our journey to welcome all of God's children just as they are. We ask you to enter this conversation in a spirit where we love one another, even if we may disagree.

This process is independent of current or future decisions of the United Methodist Church's General Conference. If we decide to join the RMN, it would be a chance to make a public statement about what our congregation believes, yet will not change FUMCOR's adherence to the Book of Discipline or other UMC doctrine.

If you wish to join our reconciling movement, or have feedback to share, please contact the chair, Greg Smith, smit92611@gmail.com. We encourage you to contact anyone on the Committee, or one of the pastors, if you want to talk one-on-one.

Yours in Christ,

Members of the Reconciling Committee:

Greg Smith, Chair; Jim Hardy; Linda Morel; Joe Thomas; Kirstine Buchanan; Cam Lloyd; Elana Watson; Susan Garrott; Danielle Tupper; Seth O'Kegley-Gibson, Staff Liaison

Caring and Coping Caregiver Workshop

Tuesday, May 24, 2022, 8:45 a.m.-2:30 p.m.
in the Multipurpose Room

This workshop, presented by Alzheimer's Tennessee, is for any and all who are caring for someone living with dementia. The program begins at 8:45 a.m. with registration and breakfast starting at 7:45 a.m. The program features two caregiving professionals and the latest research and best practices for Alzheimer's and related dementias. If you are interested and want more information, please contact Alzheimer's Tennessee at 544-6288 or contact the Keystone Adult Day Program office at 483-6631. Registration is required. The cost is \$25 per caregiver. All are welcome.



UMW Bakeless Bake Sale Results

A big "thank you" to everyone who contributed to the United Methodist Women's Bake-less Bake Sale! An amazing \$3,592 was collected this past Sunday, which the members of our UMW will spend on missions! You can still donate: please make out your checks to "UMW" with "bake-less bake sale" in the memo line. Checks made out to the church for the sale will have to be returned.

So, Did the UMC Split?

Here is the short version of what you need to know. The United Methodist Church has been divided theologically for 40+ years over the issues of LGBTQ ordination and same-sex marriages. After years of "discussing" this topic, it is clear there are multiple ways to interpret the Bible on this subject.

Web Feature: Read at <https://fumcor.org/split>

Funeral Service

for **Dianne Wilson** (who died on October 28, 2021) will be on May 14, at 10:00 a.m.

Dismissed from the Hospital:

Myra Stroud (NHC Farragut)
Mona Leake (MMC)
Bill Elkins (MMC)
Laura B. Anderson (Parkwest)
Laura W. Anderson (Parkwest)

Our Gifts:

Offering This Week:	\$55,436.97
2022 YTD offering:	\$539,282
2021 YTD offering:	\$583,868
Monthly Mission offering:	\$445.00

Pastors

Mark Flynn, lead
Jenny Caughman, spiritual care
Seth O'Kegley-Gibson, worship

Contact Information

865.483.4357 www.fumcor.org
Pastor on call: 865.272.9862

Worship for May 15

The Fifth Sunday of Easter

Scripture: Isaiah 40:28-31; Psalm 148; Revelation 21:1-6
Sermon: Hope: The Water of Life

8:45 & 11:00 am Traditional Worship
11:00 am Contemporary Worship
Preaching: Rev. Jenny Caughman



1350 Oak Ridge Turnpike
Oak Ridge, TN 37830

Return Service requested

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Community Assistance Fund Support

Our Community Assistance Fund is one of the best, behind-the-scenes ministries in our congregation. Most people hear it mentioned only during those Sundays where we celebrate Holy Communion. Those coming forward to receive the sacramental elements are invited to place a financial gift in one of the offering plates toward the front of the worship space.

Funds collected during those worship services, along with gifts made directly into the fund, are distributed by our pastoral staff to help families whose utilities have been or are about to be cut-off, as well as filling emergency gasoline requests. So far in 2022, our pastoral staff has distributed \$7,800 from the Community Assistance Fund. If you are interested in making a contribution to this important ministry, you need not wait until the next Communion service. Write "Community Assistance Fund" on the memo of your check or go to the "Give" page on our FUMCOR.org website. Thank you for your support!

FirstYouth: Handprint Time

Kelsey invites any high school senior that would like to put their handprint on the walls in the loft to contact her at kelseym@fumcor.org. Together, a time will be planned for everyone to add their handprints.

A New Sunday Morning Host Needed

We have been blessed to have Claire Gibson as our Sunday morning host over these last few months. She has done an excellent job of overseeing our hospitality ministry of welcoming visitors, answering questions, overseeing coffee and doughnuts, and reminding us all to be hospitable to one another. However, Claire has accepted a job offer for an internship out of state.



So, we are in search of our next Sunday morning host. If you or anyone you know is interested in this part-time position, please contact Linda Bowen in our Finance and Administration office or one of our pastors.

A Three-Week Class on Mental Health and Addiction

In recognition of May as Mental Health Awareness Month, our congregation will host a special, three-week Sunday School class in the Chapel beginning at 10:00 am.

- **May 15: Sarah Keel**, Executive Director of Renew Clinic, will discuss the connection between mental health and addiction.

If you have any questions, please contact Rev. Mark or Rev. Jenny.