



*“Look at how good and pleasing it is when families live together as one!” ~Psalm 133:1*

## Proposed Welcome Statement

At Westlake United Methodist Church, we affirm that all persons are created in the image of and are equally loved by God. As followers of Christ, whose love is boundless, we invite and welcome all people of every age, race, gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation, marital status, economic standing, education level, physical and mental capacity, national origin, and family configuration into full participation in the life, ministries, worship, and sacraments of this faith community.

## Reconciling Ministries Network FAQ’s

### *What is the Reconciling Ministries Network (RMN)?*

Reconciling Ministries Network envisions a renewed and vibrant Wesleyan movement that is biblically and theologically centered. RMN strives to transform the world by living out the Gospel’s teachings of grace, love, justice, and celebration of all of God’s children.

### *What does it mean for WUMC to be part of the RMN?*

Churches that are part of the RMN are churches that have made a deliberate decision to identify as churches that welcome and celebrate all God’s children.

### *Will WUMC focus on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) issues if we become an RMN church?*

Becoming RMN is about welcoming all of God’s children, regardless of age, race, gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation, marital status, economic standing, education level, physical and mental capacity, national origin, and family configuration. It will not change the focus or traditions of WUMC.

### *How will people know that WUMC is a RMN church?*

WUMC will be listed on the RMN website and identified as a RMN church. WUMC may wish to post a notice on our website, banner or sign indicating it is a RMN church.

## The One Church Plan

Rio Texas Bishop Robert Schnase shared in a recent blog that the Council of Bishops, “...voted overwhelmingly to...recommend the One Church Plan,” at the Special Session of the General Conference scheduled for February 2019. The One Church Plan proposes that all of the language restricting the inclusion of and ministry to and with LGBTQ persons be removed from the UM Book of Discipline. It further states that no Annual Conference, Bishop, Local Church or Pastor will be compelled to act inconsistently with their theological convictions. Pastors, local congregations, bishops and annual conferences are free to fully include LGBTQ persons in the life and ministry of the church.

One of Westlake UMC’s goals for this year is to have intentional conversations about human sexuality and the inclusion of the LGBTQ+ community to discern how we can align ourselves more fully with a faithful expression of the gospel. John Wesley placed great emphasis on both personal piety and social holiness, stressing that we are to minister to those on the margins and to work to transform systems that perpetuate injustice and oppression as an expression of our faith.

To advance the conversation, Church Council is proposing that the church adopt a Welcome Statement that makes it clear to those we have not yet met that we welcome all of God’s children, without exception. In addition, the Council is proposing that we affirm support for the One Church Plan (which is supported by the majority of bishops including our own) and that we affiliate with Reconciling Ministries Network so that those searching for a welcoming and inclusive church home will easily be able to find us.

On October 7, in the 11:15 am worship service, we celebrated World Communion Sunday by reflecting on who is not yet gathered around Christ’s Banquet Table. We will explore the history of the UMC’s conversation around human sexuality and learned about the Council of Bishop’s Commission on a Way Forward, including the three plans that will be proposed at the special called General Conference scheduled for February 2019, where we hope a decision will be made about how the UMC will move forward.

On the other column are the proposed Welcome Statement and some Frequently Asked Questions about what it means to affiliate with the Reconciling Ministries Network.

Sunday school classes, small groups and committees are encouraged to reflect on the three proposals together with the goal in mind of discerning each group’s support. If you are not currently participating in a small group and would like to be a part of the conversation there will be opportunity to learn and discuss today, Sunday, October 7th, and next Sunday, October 14th, during the Sunday school hour in the church Library.

Church council will follow up with each group by mid-November. At Church Council’s November 15th meeting a decision will be made, based on your responses, about adopting the three proposals.

It is my hope that we will be prayerful as we discern Westlake UMC’s way forward and that the Holy Spirit will teach us and guide us in wisdom and grace as we seek to share the banquet with all of God’s children who come to the table Christ prepares in this place.

Pastor Tracey



If you were not able to join us for this important discussion visit [westlake-umc.org/live](https://westlake-umc.org/live) for live video and service archives.