

Perhaps you are a leader (lay or ordained) in a congregation which is considering becoming welcoming to lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (lgbt) persons. Perhaps you are committed deeply to helping other congregations in your denomination become more welcoming of lgbt folks. Either scenario means that this training will be very helpful to you in honing your skills and gaining more knowledge about how to help congregations through those tough conversations toward a more fully inclusive church. Join the growing list of committed Christians who are working together across North America to foster the expansion of the welcoming church movement!

### Upcoming Building an Inclusive Church training events

In partnership with the Institute for Welcoming Resources, ReconcilingWorks offers these trainings several times a year in various locations.

To see a current schedule and to register, please see the [Institute for Welcoming Resource website](#).

### What is it?

Building an Inclusive Church is an intense workshop intended to give participants the tools and knowledge base to build local or synodical teams equipped to work effectively to foster the expansion of the RIC Program within area congregations.

The training is focused in four primary areas:

- **Faith Based Community Organizing:** Learn the skills to gracefully engage and organize money including the one-to-one visit, the proposition, and the process for building an RIC Core Team in your area.

- **Scriptural Engagement:** Trainees will gather in Bible Study, share "texts of promise" in our work for full welcome, and tackle the Bible "bullets," those passages which are used by some to oppose LGBT inclusion and equality in the church and the world.

- **I Love to Tell the Story:** Learn to tell your story strategically, compellingly, and efficiently, honing stories into powerful, two-minute instruments for persuasion. This training will focus on

integrating your own stories with talking points and positive frames for engaging the church to achieve the full welcome and inclusion of all.

- **RIC Processes and Resources:** Learn how to use a variety of RIC Resources. Each participant will receive copies of a variety of resources. You will learn how to do a congregational assessment and design a study process based on that assessment. Curriculum ideas and resources available to congregations will be demonstrated. Role plays are used to contrast typical situations of Church Council conflict with other more successful methods of discernment.

## The Plan



The strategic plan for increasing the number of Lutheran congregations which openly welcome people of all sexual orientations and gender identities includes the formation of RIC Core Teams in each synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC). Since September of 2003 people from numerous denominations, many states, and even a few countries have participated in training to build these teams. As a result, teams are now forming across North America to actively mentor congregations in a discernment process toward the adoption of an affirmation of welcome which explicitly includes people of all sexual orientations and gender identities.

## Who should come?

Lutherans and others interested in seeing the Church (meaning all churches) become more welcoming, supportive and inclusive of lgbt persons. This could include:

- Lay leaders
- Ordained leaders
- Denominational or judicatory leaders
- Members who care about these issues
- Leaders and members in denominational lgbt groups

Space is limited, so register early.

### What to expect?



The training has been designed specifically with congregations and their leaders in mind. We will explore topics which will help you to become a more effective leader in working with congregations on issues related to human sexuality and gender identity for the purpose of helping a congregation discern God's call to become more welcoming and inclusive, particularly of lgbt persons. Topics include:

- Faith-based community organizing techniques
  - Congregational conflict theory and resolution
  - Managing change in congregations well
  - Effective strategies for helping congregations discern the call to be welcoming
  - Building relationships for change
  - Conversations around biblical material, stereotypes, the "b" and the "t" questions, and other areas of concern
  - Opportunity to build relationships with others who share your concerns
  - Personal spiritual enrichment
  - Opportunity for growth and challenge
  - Intense few days of hard work, laughter, and fun
- ### What to bring?

- Well rested body, mind and spirit
- Your favorite writing implement
- Casual clothing and one church-going outfit
- A little extra cash or check book for buying additional resources

### Recommended Reading

Each participant is requested to obtain and read a copy of ***Doing Justice: Congregations and Community Organizing*** by Dennis

A Jacobsen. This book, available on line for about \$14 from [Amazon](#), will enable you to understand more quickly the organizing concepts used in the training.

### The Video

Do you want to know how to make a difference in your life by making a difference in the lives of others? Do you want to learn



how to help create the changes you and we seek? This video will help you understand how Building an Inclusive Church will help you do that. Come, Learn, Do, Create.

Watch the Building an Inclusive Church video. The video is directly playable in two formats/sizes and will open in a new window.

#### Windows Media Format

- [Small](#)
- [Large](#)

[Get Windows Media Player](#) for PC or Mac

#### Quicktime Format

- [Small](#)
- [Large](#)

[Get Quicktime Player](#) for PC or Mac

### Three-Day Training Schedule

NOTE: This schedule is tentative. We shape the training to the needs of the gathered group.

### **Day One**

12:00 Registration

1:00 Introductions:

2:00 Strategic Objectives of Training

2:30 Redesigned Concept of Self Interest-

3:00 Role of Vocation in this work

3:30 Congregational Assessment-Longitudinal View

4:15 Basics of Graceful Engagement

4:45 Framing

6:00 Dinner

6:45 Evening Prayer

### Day Two

9:00 Morning Prayer

9:30 Learning the B and T in the GLBT movement

10:30 One on One Training

11:15 Role Play One on One

11:35 Debrief One on One

11:45 Lunch

12:30 Practice One on One

1:15 Debrief One on One experience

2:00 Story Telling

4:00 Scripture Engagement

5:30 Dinner and closing prayer

### Day Three

9:00 Welcome and morning prayer

9:30 Denominational Engagement

11:00 Worship with Local church

12:30 Lunch

1:30 The Welcoming Toolkit

1:00 Building a Team

1:15 Action Planning

2:15 Closing Prayer and Evaluations

### The Trainers

**Emily Eastwood** is the Executive Director of ReconcilingWorks and the Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Program. She is a lifelong Lutheran, would-be pastor, story-teller, organizer and sometime stand up comic. She and her partner, Jan Bailey, are members of the first RIC congregation. Emily is a graduate of Texas Lutheran College and attended both Gettysburg and Luther Seminaries before choosing a career in business to support her church habit. For the next 18 years, Emily worked as a volunteer in ministry with and on behalf of LGBT people, their families and friends. In May of 2002, Emily was hired to run the Reconciling in Christ Program. In July of 2004, Emily was named Executive Director of ReconcilingWorks. Emily travels throughout North America working to promote the mission of the organization and the need for

all of God's children to be welcome in their church. Using the principles of faith based community organizing she is building and training teams to foster the expansion of the RIC program in the Lutheran church.

**Rev Vicki Wunsch** has worked in both non profit organizations and churches for the last 15 years. In addition to her position as An IWR trainer, she is a trainer with Family and Children's Services in Minneapolis. In this position, Vicki works with schools, non profits and faith communities in helping communities support families and parents. Vicki's experience has included facilitating a wide variety of workshops and trainings for churches. Topics have included "Building Strengths and Assets in our Church Family," "Developing Family Prayer Practices," "Faith Communities responding to Immigration," "Creating and Implementing an Intergenerational Social Justice Program," "All are Welcome: Building an inclusive Church Community," "Fostering Children's Spiritual Development," and "Celebrating Family Traditions." Vicki received her Masters Degree in Training and Instructional Design from the University of Minnesota and focused her thesis on "Building Community through Education in our Faith Communities. Vicki recently received her Masters of Divinity at United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities. She is also co-authoring a book entitled Reclaiming our History: Finding the Community in our Faith Communities.

**Dr Michael J Adee**, National Field Organizer for More Light Presbyterians, is an openly gay Elder in the Presbyterian Church (USA). He lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Michael has been working in the LGBT and HIV-AIDS community since 1988. A human rights activist and educator, he earned his PhD at Louisiana State University. Having served as a college professor in Louisiana, Kentucky and Ohio, he has also been a hospital and hospice chaplain, bereavement counselor, campus minister, diversity consultant, tennis coach and a teacher / relief worker in Zimbabwe, Africa. A welcoming congregation in Cincinnati loved Michael back to church and enabled him to reclaim faith as a gay man. He became involved in the welcoming church movement as a volunteer in 1991, and as National Field Organizer with More Light Presbyterians in 1999. As an out gay athlete he competed in tennis at the 1st World Outgames in Montreal winning a bronze medal and in the last four Gay Games winning a Silver Medal in Chicago. He recently climbed Mount Kilimanjaro as a benefit for equality.

**Rev Rebecca Voelkel**, an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ, is the Executive Officer for the Institute for Welcoming Resources, a national, ecumenical collaboration of the Welcoming Church Movement. Before coming to IWR, she served as Interim National Coordinator for the UCC Coalition for LGBT Concerns, as pastor of Spirit of the Lakes UCC and as Program Staff for the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence. Rev Voelkel is the author of *Preventing Sexual Abuse: A Course of Study for Teenagers* (Pilgrim Press, 1996) as well as numerous articles and sermons which have appeared in such journals as

*Spirit Currents*

,  
*The Journal of Religion and Abuse*

, and

*Parenting for Peace and Justice*

. She is a graduate of Earlham College and Yale Divinity School and is currently working towards a Doctor of Ministry at United Theological Seminary in the Twin Cities. Rev Voelkel has devoted her life's ministry to following Jesus' command to minister to "the least of these," ones whom society has deemed outcast, unclean or unworthy. As a way to balance her spiritual life, Rebecca is also a runner, hiker, biker and avid community-builder, spending time with her friends and family as often as she can.

### **More information**

If you have questions, please contact the ReconcilingWorks office, 651-665-0861, [admin@ReconcilingWorks.org](mailto:admin@ReconcilingWorks.org)