

OREGON-IDAHO RECONCILING UNITED METHODISTS DRAFT *CHAMPOEG DECLARATION*

Most congregations in Oregon and Idaho would affirm that everyone is welcome to attend, participate in, and join their church. This last year has been a discouraging time for people who believe that the United Methodist Church is and should be open to everyone, for in October 2005 the Judicial Council of The United Methodist Church upheld a United Methodist pastor in Virginia who had repeatedly turned away a gay man who sought to join the church where he had worshipped for many years.

When Reconciling United Methodists from the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference met July 22, 2006, at Champoeg State Park, Oregon, they decided to draft a simple *Champoeg Declaration* that could be affirmed by congregations in the Annual Conference who want to make it clear that no one will be turned away from worship or membership in their churches. Acting together in this way, United Methodists congregations in the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference hope to make a bold statement of welcome and generate positive publicity for our churches whose hearts, minds, and doors are truly open.

John Schweibert reminded those present that the first provisional government in the Oregon territory was established at Champoeg in May 1843, and that the first act of that government was to vote, by a measure of 52 to 50, to petition the Congress of the United States to make Oregon a State, thereby determining that the Pacific Northwest would be a part of the United States. With a great appreciation of the way that the actions of pioneers can set the tone for the future, the Oregon-Idaho Reconciling United Methodists decided that it was a serendipitous convergence of history and purpose to name this pioneering statement of welcome and outreach for the spirit of Champoeg.

Oregon-Idaho Reconciling United Methodists encourage Conference congregations to consider and affirm the *Champoeg Declaration*. Together, we can make a powerful witness that, in this territory, when we say "Open Minds, Open Hearts, Open Doors," we really mean it. The document will be available to be downloaded from www.oirums.org. Word of congregational affirmation of the *Champoeg Declaration* can be sent to OI RUMs c/o MUMC, PO Box 3076, Salem OR 97302-0076 or via email to <yourbest@juno.com>.

Oregon-Idaho Reconciling United Methodists generally meet on the second Saturdays of odd-numbered months. The next meetings will be November 11, 2006, Wesley UMC, Eugene, and January 13, 2007, Morningside UMC, Salem. Meetings are from 10 am to 2 pm.

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