



# Church Within A Church Movement

## Historical Timeline of the Church Within A Church Movement

“It was in response to and immediately following the United Methodist General Conference 2000 that the first thoughts of the movement that would become Church Within A Church were born. Those that participated in the early discussions shared a perception that the best stewardship of time and energy for some folks would be a redirection away from trying to reform a single denomination to modeling in congregations of various affiliations the full inclusiveness and justice orientation, which the Gospels celebrated and demanded.” Greg Dell

Date	Location	Result
July 2001	Tacoma, WA	Clergy Alliance was formed at the Reconciling Ministries Network (RMN) Convocation. Formerly the Reconciling Congregation Program, RMN was enabling new networks to form independent in agenda and connecting in the goal to address issues of justice and healing around sexual orientation and the UMC. Clergy Alliance work coalesced around 4 working “pods” – <u>Reform</u> (working within the denomination to change discriminatory policies) <u>Radical Obedience</u> (Commitment to radical obedience to the gospel’s mandate for full inclusiveness) <u>Remodeling</u> (Professing Church) <u>Theology</u> . Rev. Susan J. Morrison and Rev. Gregory Dell chosen as “Professing Church” coordinators.
Fall 2001	Washington, DC	Remodeled “Professing Church” grew out of Clergy Alliance meeting. A need for a laity and clergy joint effort was determined. “Professing Church” idea draws on the model of the Confessing Church movement that emerged during WWII in Germany in resistance to the national church’s collusion with the Nazi Gov’t. “Professing Church” will focus on developing the resources needed for full inclusive ministry. Incubator and model for an emerging church. Less focused on attempting to directly interact with the denomination than it will be committed to enabling faithful ministry by participating clergy and congregations. Joint letter from Susan J. Morrison, Gregory Dell, Marilyn Alexander (RMN Executive Director) calls for organizational meeting for “Church Within A Church”
February 2002	Atlanta, GA	Founding meeting of “Professing Church”. <i>“We have been called by God to do justice.”</i> The invitation RMN sent indicated some of the distinction of this new church movement from both the Clergy Alliance and the Reconciling Congregation Program. In part it stated – <i>“Some have called it, “The Professing Church”, “The Church of Resistance”, still others, “Resources at the Cutting Edge.”</i> <i>The newly formed Clergy Alliance of the Reconciling Ministries Network (RMN) has asked RMN to initiate a call to activate this idea <u>as a lay/clergy movement</u> under the title, “A Church Within a Church.”</i> About 40 people attended-clergy and laity from across the US. A Coordinating Team was elected. A new church start was envisioned by 2 attendees and eventually planted in Palm Springs, CA.
September 2002	Plainfield, NJ  Mark Miller/ Greg Dell Co-conveners	About 30 in attendance. Church Within A Church took up active fundraising for new church starts and operational support. Also took some bold steps not explicitly envisioned in the original Clergy Alliance thinking. First among those was that CWAC would not be a single-issue movement: drafted theology statement based on Clergy Alliance one so aligned with each other. Added confession of “sin of exclusion.” <i>In living out our vision, we commit ourselves to full inclusion of all persons without</i>

		<i>regard to status or economic condition and celebrating race, color, national origin, sexual orientation and gender identities. CWAC decided to be separate organizationally from RMN while remaining a collaborative partner. Designed logo and Website. Embraced Bloom in The Desert Ministries and Cambridge Welcoming Ministries as new church starts plus Central UM Church in Toledo as a revitalizing congregation.</i>
March 2003	Tempe, AZ Greg Dell Convener	Vision statement refined to “BE church in a fully inclusive way.” Adopted. Mission statement remained. CWAC movement decided neither to leave the UMC nor stay. Remain in ‘tension’ as developed innovative and inclusive ministries.
October 2003	Columbus, OH	First mini workshop on “Church Revitalization for Congregations that seek to be Welcoming. Moving from a declining church to a vital congregation.” Involved local churches and conference staff. Coordinating Team decided to distribute a portion of contributions from a recent fund raiser to the four endorsed new/revitalized congregations. Coordinating Team for 2003-2004 was confirmed.
March 2004	Chicago, IL	Decided not to engage in legislative actions of upcoming UMC General Conference – ‘we do not worship at the altar of legislation’- but did want display table and resource space. Representatives of Church Within A Church became liaisons to a progressive UM coalition active at General Conference and beyond, all the while noting our intention to focus on BEing church rather than changing a denomination.
May 2004	Washington, DC	Representatives of CWAC gathered with representatives of the progressive coalition to debrief General Conference 2004. CWAC asked the coalition if there was room for the Movement at the table since they were focused on affecting change in the denomination. CWAC collaboration was affirmed.
June 2004	Chicago, IL	Hired cathy knight as part time staff focusing on marketing and development.
October 2004	Chicago, IL Gil Caldwell/Cheri Holdridge/Greg Dell co-conveners	CWAC semi-annual national meeting. Discernment process accessing whether volunteers had enough energy, interest to keep pushing forward. Hard work. Resounding ‘Yes’ was the answer. Tightened up strategies and put action plan in place. Focusing on new church starts, “irregular” ordinations, anti-racism/privilege and curriculum and worship resources.
January 2005	Chicago, IL	Hired cathy knight as first full time staff. Executive Director’s office set up in Chicago.
April 2005	Los Angeles, CA Cheri Holdridge/Greg Dell co-conveners	Semi-annual national meeting. Strong commitment to explore extraordinary ordinations and actively seek new church starters. Workshop planned for October meeting around discerning a call to church planting.
October 2005	Kansas City, MO	October 13 Day of Discernment – “Is God Calling me to be a Church Planter?” led by a UMC congregational developer. October 14-15, semi-annual Coordinating Team national meeting. Met with seminary students at St. Paul Theological Seminary. Re-affirmed call to proceed with “Extraordinary” Ordinations. Weathervane Ministries (Rev. Gail Simonds) in UP of Michigan recognized as affiliated new church start of CWAC.
March 2006	Nashville, TN Kevin A. Johnson/Cheri Holdridge co-conveners	Semi-annual national meeting of Coordinating Team. First time meeting began with Work Area meetings on day prior to CT. Work Areas outlined strategies for moving forward. Decided on “One” ordination process for the CWAC movement.
August 2006	San Diego, CA	UMC School of Congregational Development. CWAC sent ED and 2 Co-Coordinators to attend. CWAC display in Exhibitor space.
August 2006	Chicago, IL	Exhibitor at International UMC Clergywomen’s Consultation sponsored by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.
October 2006	Denver, CO	Oct. 11-12 Time of Discernment – “Is God Calling me to plant a faith community?” (canceled) Oct. 12-14 Semi-annual national meeting of the Coordinating Team. Hired Linda Ray Miller as web resource consultant to launch Just Ministry Resources.
October 2006	Iowa City, IA	Exhibitor /attendee at Holy Relationships Regional Conference. Co-sponsored by Human Rights Campaign, Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies in Religion at the Pacific

		School of Religion, Wesley Foundation of Iowa City, IA and Call to Action, Soul Friends, and Room for All.
Nov. 3-4, 2006	North Olmsted, OH	“Higher Ground!” Worship Team workshop featuring Mark Miller renowned UMC musician, composer, teacher and advocate for full inclusion of the church. Inaugural CWAC event for worship resources.
March 8-10, 2007	Morristown, NJ Cheri Holdridge/ Kevin A. Johnson co-conveners	Semi-annual national meeting of the Coordinating Team. Host Morristown UMC. First training with Rev. Dr. Traci West on Multiracial/ multicultural congregations. Ordination packet set for “Ecumenical ordinations in the Methodist tradition minus the closet.”
Nov. 9-10, 2007	Boston, MA Kevin A. Johnson and Cheri Holdridge co-conveners	Living a New Vision: The Struggle Continues! Symposium at historic Union UMC. Reception and Banquet at Hilton Boston Back Bay. CWAC launches Gilbert H. Caldwell Justice Ministry Award with Gil Caldwell the inaugural recipient. <i>Something Within; Works</i> by Rev. Gilbert H. Caldwell published by CWAC.
Feb. 27-29, 2008	Los Angeles, CA Annual Meeting of Black Methodists for Church Renewal (BMCR)	CWAC Coordinating Team (CT) convener Rev. Kevin A. Johnson, E.D. cathy knight, Honorary CT member Rev. Gilbert H. Caldwell, and CT member Rev. Kelvin Sauls attend BMCR meeting in L.A. First time a mostly white progressive caucus attends BMCR annual meeting. Rev. Sauls arranges for book signing and conversation with Gil Caldwell. “Historic conversation”* of LGBT people in the church facilitated by Gil and Kelvin. *the words of BMCR conversation participants.
March 7-8, 2008	Palm Springs, CA. Kevin A. Johnson convener	Semi-annual meeting of the Church Within A Church Movement Coordinating Team meets in Palm Springs. Interviews candidates for Extraordinary Ordination. Ann Craig, - M. Div, Director of Religion, Faith and Values at GLAAD (Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) Training on Media and Messaging.
2007-2008		The staff and national Coordinating Team spends considerable time on new strategies for messaging to the variety of constituencies and those yet to be engaged with the Movement.
March 9, 2008	Bloom in the Desert Ministries, Palm Springs, CA	Church Within A Church Movement celebrates 5 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of Sunday morning worship at Bloom in the Desert Ministries. Record attendance. Cajun King Cake Party Pot Luck Brunch follows worship.
October 17-18, 2008	Baltimore, MD Kevin A. Johnson and Vernice Thorn co-conveners	National Coordinating Team meets at Mount Vernon Place UMC. Elects new CT members, celebrates first Extraordinary Ordination. “Power Flower” training led by Anti-Racism/White Privilege Work Area. 2 <sup>nd</sup> Media Training with Ann Craig, - M.Div, Director of Religion, Faith and Values at GLAAD (Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation)
October 19, 2008	Baltimore, MD	First Extraordinary Ordination takes place at Mount Vernon Place UMC. An Ecumenical Ordination in a Methodist Tradition Minus the Closet! "Living Tomorrow Today" Annie Britton and Jenna Zirbel ordained by The Church Within A Church Movement. Rev. Annie Britton and Rev. Jenna Zirbel among six others to be elected to 2009 national Coordinating Team.
March 5-6, 2009	White Plains, NY Kevin A. Johnson and Vernice Thorn co-conveners	Semi-annual meeting of the CWAC Coordinating Team meets at Memorial UMC in White Plains, NY. Rev. Joe Agne graciously greets the Movement and introduces fellow building users THE LOFT. Planning begins for membership launch and Rev. Greg Dell unanimously chosen to be recipient of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Gilbert H. Caldwell Justice Ministry award.
September 24, 2009	Chicago, IL	Walter Wink lecture “Non-Violence for the Violent” kicks off weekend with lecture co-sponsored by CWAC and Chicago Theological Seminary.
September 25-26, 2009	Chicago, IL	“Living in the Now: The Journey to Justice” event honoring Greg Dell takes place at Ramada Hyde Park, Chicago. Walter Wink lecture “Non-Violence for the Violent” kicks off weekend with lecture co-sponsored by CWAC and Chicago Theological Seminary. In the midst of The Journey to Justice event CWAC unveils 2 <sup>nd</sup> published resource – “Celebrating Life: Liturgy That Transforms.” The national Coordinating Team meets with Rev. Kevin A. Johnson and Rev. Vernice Thorn co-convening. New officers elected.

March 12-14, 2010	Vernice Thorn and Terry Schwennesen co-conveners New Orleans, LA	CWAC volunteer day with LA UMCOR – 12 volunteers worked in 9 <sup>th</sup> Ward. National Coordinating Team meeting with ½ day Dismantling Racism training with People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond. After years of training and discernment, CWAC takes historic step and adopts Anti-Racist Intent – “With this statement, we formally and publicly declare our intention to become an anti-racist organization.” The statement can be found at <a href="http://www.cwac.us">www.cwac.us</a> .
April 2010	National	Anti-Racism/White Privilege Work Area launches first Dismantling Racism Teleconference. 16 people are meeting by phone for a 7 month study. Second Dismantling Racism Teleconference will begin June 2010.
April 2010	Kansas	Two Kansas City area JustChurch meetings are held with executive director cathy knight and CT member Colleen Riley in attendance.
May, 2010	Providence, RI	JustChurch Meetings held in Providence, RI. CT members Rev. Annie Britton and Terry Schwennesen hosts.
October 14-16, 2010	Providence, RI	National CT meeting held at Mathewson Street UMC in Providence. Two candidates approved for ordination. Supported Mathewson Street UMC’s Community Meal serving the homeless population in Providence, RI.
June-December, 2010	National	Anti-Racism/White Privilege Work Area of CWAC hosts first national teleconference. National group of anti-racism activists, church leaders and lay persons study Joseph Barndt’s “Understanding and Dismantling Racism: 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Challenge to White America.” Led by Work Area co-leaders Manny Ayala and Terry Schwennesen.
March 4-6, 2011	Chicago, IL	REVIVAL CWAC-Style. National Coordinating Team and CWAC Members gather to share stories, meditate, study, laugh, commune, dream, and be community. REVIVAL CWAC-Style culminates in Ordination Work Area leader Colleen Riley preaching her first sermon since giving back her clergy credentials in the fall of 2010. Worship service at Broadway Church, Chicago.
October 21-23, 2011	Tucson, AZ Terry Schwennesen and Vernice Thorn co-conveners	Second CWAC “Ecumenical Ordination in a Methodist Tradition Minus the Closet!” “Living Justice in the Wilderness” is theme for weekend that includes CWAC Gathering “Remember, Dream, Witness, Question”, Immigration Reform: The Intersection of Oppressions panel, a service project with TIHAN, workshop with 1n10 and Saturday night “Living Justice” dinner and telling our stories. DeLyn Celec and Robyn Morrison ordained Sunday October 23, 2011 at St. Mark’s Presbyterian Church.
March 16, 2012	Lawrence, KS Vernice Thorn and Terry Schwennesen Co-conveners	National Coordinating and friends gather Friday March 16 at Ecumenical Ministries Center, University of Kansas. Considered the Movement’s identity as expressed in supporting documents: Theological Statement, Mission, Vision, Community Values statement. Agreed by consensus to begin Racial Identity Caucusing under the leadership of the Anti-Racism/White Privilege Work Area.
March 17, 2012	Lawrence, KS	“JustChurch” Lawrence! First regional “JustChurch” event for 2012. A day planned by local people – Colleen Riley (Coordinating Team member) and Christopher Spirtheart (Little Osage Indian and Two-Spirit). A profound, expansive experience for Movement members and friends. Private tour in <a href="#">Haskell Indian Nations University Cultural Center and Museum</a> and Christopher lead an act of reclaiming your heart at the Medicine Wheel.
May 1, 2012	Tampa, FL	“JustChurch” Tampa! 2 <sup>nd</sup> Regional JustChurch event for 2012. Rev. Annie Britton and wife Terry Schwennesen, Rev. DeLyn Celec and wife Sarah Celec, Dave Lafary (gave up UMC clergy credentials in 2010) and cathy knight host CWAC Movement members and friends at UMC General conference, for dinner and conversation. Witnessing to Equality in Action.