

## Welcoming Church Programs

Jon & Nancy Mendenhall attended the Ecumenical Core Team Leadership Training at the Temple in Independence December 1-4. The training was sponsored by United Methodists' "Reconciling Ministries Network", Lutherans' "Reconciling in Christ Program", and Community of Christ's "Welcoming Community Network" (GALA).

Approximately 30 participants spent 12 hours a day learning skills to build Core Teams and assist congregations in the process of becoming welcoming.

The essential quality of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is laid bare in the call to "*love your neighbor as yourself*". It was from this foundational principle of the gospel that delegates of the 1992 World Conference passed a resolution affirming the worth of all persons and calling congregations to openness and acceptance.

Yet even with that statement on diversity that affirms the worth of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered persons, issues regarding homosexuality continue to divide persons within the Community of Christ more sharply than most other issues. Thirteen years later, only 5 Community of Christ congregations are officially "Welcoming Community Network Congregations". (see the following website for a list of congregations: <http://www.galaweb.org/wcnlinks.htm> #welcoming)

For more information about the *process* a congregation must go through to become an official Welcoming congregation, contact Jon or Nancy Mendenhall.

