

## Minutes for the Discernment Team meeting 6/2/22

Members present: David McCoy, Wray Hodgins, Dan Smoak, Jim Holcomb, Michael Amos, Steve Bouldin, Trip Dixon, Mary Sansing, Barbara Coughlin

1. Opening Prayer- Barbara 6:30

2. Questions asked at the Town Hall Meeting:

-Please give diverse sources on Wesley Memorial's website for members to obtain information. *Thank you for this comment. We have resolved to provide this to the congregation on our portion of the website soon.*

-Please describe the future picture of WMUMC staying with the UMC versus WMUMC leaving the UMC.

*This is a very complicated question with many unknowns. This is a good part of the essence of what our committee is trying to discern.*

-What are the financial consequences of disaffiliation to the property of Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church?

*This is a topic that we are currently researching.*

*The answer may be unknown until the 2024 General Conference.*

-There is a page on the Wesley Memorial website that lists viewpoints from traditional sources only. Shouldn't there be sources from other viewpoints as well?

*Absolutely! We want to give a variety of viewpoints for the congregation to consider. Sources from the UMC and the traditional viewpoints are readily available. The viewpoint of progressives is being researched and we will provide this as soon as we can on the website.*

-Is there a process by which the General Conference could be compelled to convene in 2023 to vote on The Protocol?

*We will investigate, but the probable answer is no.*

-Does anyone on the discernment team have the spiritual gift of discernment?

*See below (#4).*

-Statement by Tom Smothers: I know and trust the members on the DT. Discussed CHARITY-Ascribing the best possible motive to what others say or do. Asked that the congregation grant the Discernment Team (DT) charity. This is everyone's opportunity to look at what may be the issues for themselves-what they believe. Take the time to do the research.

-Statement by McKennon Shea: Agrees with Tom's encouragement to show grace to each other and members of the DT. She stated that the UMC is not disagreeing with or planning to change any of the core teachings around the Bible or the core theological convictions of the UMC such

as Jesus is the son of God, the truth of the Resurrection, etc. The disagreements center around differing interpretations of a few verses of scripture about human sexuality.

### 3. What should be posted on the website?

-Handouts from Town Hall meeting.

-List helpful resources under categories such as: UMC sources, traditional sources, progressive sources. UMC and traditional sources readily available. Barbara will contact people at Duke and Michael will talk with McKennon Shea for suggested progressive resources.

- Articles requested to be posted by members of the congregation will be considered, but must be approved by the discernment team prior to publication on the website to assure that a variety of perspectives are presented. Not all articles considered will be posted due to the huge volume of articles available.

-Mary and Barbara will meet with Teresa Loflin (Communications Director) soon to discuss the layout of the discernment team portion of the website.

### 4. Does anyone on the Discernment Team have the gift of discernment?

Many members of the discernment team have taken a spiritual gifts assessment exam. David, to his and his wife's surprise, scored high on discernment. Mary shared that she has had several experiences of being led by the Holy Spirit, with much initial resistance, into paths that she would not have chosen for herself. Others on the team shared that they also felt led by the Holy Spirit, often during times of prayer as they tried to open themselves to God's guidance. Wray talked about how the responsibility of being on the discernment team is "invading" his daily prayer time. Michael shared that he has learned to listen and go where God takes him.

5. The team feels a need to be bathed in prayer. Barbara suggested that we need to have other people praying for us. Dan talked about the continual prayer that happens during an Emmaus Walk. We spent time discussing our important connections who might be willing to pray for our team. We thought about: The WOW Bible study group, The Pineapple Unity group, Lucille Duncan's Sunday School class, Aldersgate Miller Memorial class, Stephen's Ministry group, Congregational Care Team, Michael and Dan's unity group (Second Story Men), Andy Koren (Rabbi of Temple Emmanuel), others in our church family.

6. The Administrative Team has requested that someone from the discernment team speak to each Sunday service about our team. We made the following assignments: Dan will speak at 8:30, David will speak at Contemporary Service and Trip will speak at 11:00 service. June 12 is the best date for those speakers.

7. We discussed the need for a pastoral presence on our committee. Every committee in the church has a pastor present for their meetings. We feel that we have a need to be pastored as well.

8. The members of the discernment team come from a variety of perspectives. The team is committed to being open, transparent, and as unbiased and objective as we can. We discussed that we should listen to, respect and take into consideration what other people in the church

are saying, but that we should have the final say about our procedure and purpose. Wray suggested inviting Lisa Tanico to be a member of our team and all agreed. She has accepted and will join us at our next meeting. Jennifer Ayers who will be joining the church at the end of June has also agreed to join the team.

9. Updates on the progress in research of our issues:

-Dan-Researching possible changes in the UMC Book of Discipline regarding the issue of homosexuality and the authority of Scripture.

Prays twice a day about his research. Reading resources from both sides including Bishop Ken Carter's book.

-Michael- Researching "Why are the traditionalists leaving the UMC instead of the progressives?" Has been reading several books and read a good summary article.

-Steve-Researching financial consequences of disaffiliation. Has compiled 15 pages so far and this has required a good bit of digging into details. Discussed the recent decision on disaffiliation procedures by our neighboring Annual Conference, the North Carolina Annual Conference.

-Dave and Barbara- Researching the Trust Clause regarding church property and assets including endowments. Listened to a webinar with Lloyd Lunsford as speaker. He is a lawyer who specializes in Trust Agreements. The court case in Georgia has been settled.

9. Closing prayer- Michael

Adjourned 8:15