

Minutes of Discernment Team Meeting May 5, 2022

In attendance: Michael Amos, Steve Bouldin, Clark Chilton, Mary Sansing, Barbara Coughlin, Trip Dixon, Wray Hodgin, Dave McCoy, Jessica Nelson.

1. Mary opened the meeting with prayer.
2. A Covenant Agreement for the Team was passed. (*See attachment*)
3. The suggested Purpose Statement was revised as follows:

This committee was formed as an exploratory team because of the possible splitting of our United Methodist Church (UMC) denomination.

Our purpose is to **objectively gather as much information as possible** about the relevant issues and to **disseminate that information** to the congregation, so that (if called upon) the congregation can be equipped to make an informed decision about whether to remain a member of the UMC denomination. We will also carefully discern what alternatives may be available for Wesley Memorial in the future.

We anticipate that our work will be thorough and ongoing. Any vote taken about the future of our church will be from the congregation and not this team. We encourage our Wesley Memorial family to do their own research on these issues. We welcome and encourage open dialogue with team members.

4. A discussion was had about what issues we should begin researching. Cards will be distributed at the Town Hall meeting on May 31 asking for suggested topics of research from the congregation. The following issues were presented and team member assignments were made as follows:

- Possible changes in the UMC Book of Discipline regarding the issue of homosexuality, such as how to handle same-sex marriages on church property or by an ordained minister and ordination of practicing homosexuals. The authority of Scripture. Dan Smoak and Wray Hodgin
- Appointment of lifetime Bishops. Guaranteed appointments for Ordained ministers. Clark Chilton
- Trust clause regarding church property and assets including endowments. Reminder that there is a court case in Georgia on the issue. Barbara Coughlin, Dave McCoy
- Financial consequences of disaffiliation. Steve Bouldin
- Pros and cons of joining the GMC. Jessica Nelson

-Future financial health of the UMC if they continue on their current path of administrative costs & increasing apportionments. Trip Dixon

-Why are the traditionalists leaving the UMC instead of the progressives? Mary Sansing, Mike Amos

-Michael Amos agreed to do a summary. A FAQ sheet was suggested and will be considered.

5. -We also agreed to send an email to the congregation with our purpose statement, our minutes, our contact info and an invitation to 2 other opportunities to listen to speakers (Dr. Danker May 23 & District Superintendent and her Assistant July 10).

-We discussed the need to communicate with the congregation in an ongoing way through email.

-The discernment team agreed that the congregation should have opportunities to hear a variety of speakers and agreed that we would endorse (though not lead) these opportunities as long as we are aware of who is speaking and what their topic will be. We could provide an introduction of speakers if needed.

6. Jerry Cornwell is stepping down from the team due to health concerns.

7. Barbara closed the meeting with prayer.

Reminder of upcoming events:

-If okayed by Admin Team, May 23 the church is hosting Dr. Ryan Danker, Associate Professor of Church History and Methodist Studies at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington DC. He wrote the book The Next Methodism and will be discussing his book.

-Sunday, July 10: Our Northern Piedmont District Superintendent, Rev. Bev Copley will preach at all 3 services .

Rev. Amy Coles, Assistant to Bishop Carter, will speak at the church at 5:30.