

Summary of October 19, 2022,
Prayer and Discernment Team Meeting

Present for the meeting were: Steve White, Dale Cohen, Will Beadle, Al Ford, Kathy Gamble, Lisa Keys-Mathews, Mak Knowlden, Katy Beth Carr, Calvin Durham, Terry Buchanan, Lindsey Mussleman Davis, Terry Stubblefield.

The meeting began with prayer from Terry Stubblefield followed by a devotional from Lisa Keys-Mathews: “Jesus Stopping the Storm” utilizing Micah 6:8. The message reflected upon the importance of walking humbly with God. As a team, we were encouraged to reflect upon the serious task at hand, but not to take ourselves too seriously.

Discussion then followed about where we are as a team in the Discernment process. The team discussed the need for trust and transparency in the Discernment process. The team agreed that the congregation needs to be fully apprised of the issues throughout Discernment. Various methods of assuring that the congregation is kept in the loop as to the Discernment process also discussed. All agreed that each would share with their Sunday school class and/or small groups issues related to the Discernment process and update them as to the team’s progress. All agreed building trust and assuring transparency with the congregation in the the Discernment process are crucial.

The team was then led through a brief study from the Book of Discipline as to what we believe as United Methodist. The evening focus was upon scripture. The Book of Discipline points out the scripture is the primary source and criterion for Christian Doctrine. (Source: **2016 UMC Book of Discipline**, pp 73, 83-85).

Discussion then followed as to paragraph 2553 in relation to the directives in that disaffiliation under paragraph 2553 must relate to concerns about human sexuality. Paragraph 2553 disaffiliation is based upon this issue alone and not other topics relative to the United Methodist Church. Paragraph 2553 is a very limited purpose disaffiliation and not a broad basis upon which disaffiliation can be utilized. The history of paragraph 2553 was discussed.

The team discussed that while the directive of paragraph 2553 is very limited in scope, the team hopes that the Discernment process itself will lead to a greater communication and unity among the congregation and will forge a path forward in working together after the Discernment process.

The team then discussed moving forward with survey questions. After discussion, the team agreed that the initial survey, *expected to be the first of several*, will include a limited number of questions to give the team an overview of the congregation's position as to the issues related to United Methodism and human sexuality. From the information gleaned from the survey results, the team will then determine how best to move forward with future survey questions. The initial survey will not be a final survey, but only the first survey. In addition, the survey will request information as to what information the congregation believes they need in the Discernment process as well as attempting to determine the best communication methods for

getting information out to all of the congregation in an effort to generate the greatest response possible to the survey.

The team discussed the specific questions which will be utilized on the survey and the timeline for doing so. As to the survey tally, there will be no tallying of the survey responses until *all* responses are received. The survey will be answered anonymously.

Discernment Team emails may be sent to **discernment@fumcflo.org**. To date, no emails have been sent to the Discernment team for response.

In the course of the Discernment process it was suggested that the Bishop be invited to speak to the congregation. Dale will extend the invitation immediately to the Bishop.

Discussion followed as to the time frame for lining up speakers as to various matters relevant to the Discernment process.

Discussions were had as to the proposed website and the team agreed to immediately move forward with setting this up. The team agreed as to certain information which will be provided on the website along with suggested links. Reading Andy Stanley's "*Not In It To Win It*".

Before the next meeting, all members are to consider future recommendations and plans for Discernment speakers and suggestions for information to be provided.

Dale closed the meeting with prayer.

The next meeting is set for 7:00 PM on Wednesday, November 2, 2022.