

UMCSC Local Church Discernment Process

Adnah Family,

As you know, we have begun conversation around the Possibility of disaffiliation from the United Methodist Church. The South Carolina Annual Conference has said,

The Local Church Discernment Process is designed to help local churches determine whether they can function as a United Methodist church if they firmly believe that the denomination has not consistently upheld its stated doctrine on issues of human sexuality. It will provide an opportunity for church members to engage in dialogue, to allow every voice in the congregation an opportunity to be heard, and to discern the congregation's sentiment regarding separation.

The church council has voted to pursue this according to the parameters set by the annual conference. We have already begun the process with the first meeting several weeks ago and there will be more meetings as the summer goes on. These are difficult conversations, often charged with strong emotion. Regardless of the outcome, there will be great pain felt by the entirety of the congregation. That said, we will be enforcing some ground rules for the upcoming conversations.

1. Speakers will not be interrupted whether at the podium or in the congregation. We will offer civility and respect to the speaker/moderator.
2. Everyone will be given the opportunity to speak at the appointed time. Speak only when acknowledged.
3. Everyone has the right to participate in discussion if they wish before anyone may speak a second time.
4. Only one thing/issue can be discussed at a time.
5. All discussion will address the issues at hand. We will not make personal attacks against individuals. In other words, stick to the point and the point only.
6. Individual speeches, in those meetings where called for, will be limited to three minutes to give everyone who wishes to the opportunity to speak.
7. Individuals who become disruptive to process will be asked to leave.

Please be mindful of others and prayerful for our congregation as we navigate the next few months. The official vote for whether the church disaffiliates or not will be in the sanctuary on September 7th at 6:30pm.