



October 27, 2022

Legacy United Methodist Church is composed of people who confess Jesus is Lord and follow him in the Methodist way of prevenient, justifying and sanctifying grace. Around that unity, there is a great diversity, a wide range of different theological, political and philosophical understandings. One could say we are a church of the messy middle, as described in Romans 14.

We are people who live, work and share faith with others with differing understandings than our own. As such, we seek to honor everyone as we build a culture that strives to **ask anything, listen well, freely disagree, and love regardless.**

Moreover, we believe issues of our Social Principles should be decided at the General and Annual Conference levels. In our life together as Legacy, we seek to not have divisive votes that can cause pain for those whose positions do not prevail.

We are a congregation that honors our denominational covenant; among other commitments, United Methodists practice a traditional view of marriage. However, our attenders, regulars and members have a variety of perspectives on same-sex marriage and ordination standards. We reject the practice of compartmentalizing people into categories according to their actual or perceived perspectives.

We recognize we are living in a transitional season in the life of the Methodist movement. There are many factors that will determine the future; the final forms are not clearly in sight. We are “seeing but through a glass darkly” (1 Corinthians 13:12).

Here are some of the unknowns:

- Actions of the 2024 United Methodist General (worldwide) Conference
- Some UM churches are moving to the Global Methodist Church (GMC); shape, polity and actual practice of the GMC still developing, as they will not officially gather until sometime in 2023
- Future of the Dakotas Annual Conference after some churches exit for GMC

We will carefully and intentionally explore all options and seek the best course for the future of our church. During the season of unknowns that will exist for the next few years, we seek to continue the powerful ministry of Legacy that has been known for the past 125 years.

We covenant that this season of transition will not affect the vital ministries of Legacy Church. We exist **to intentionally be a multi-generational and multi-ethnic community of impact growing hope, healing and wholeness through Jesus.**



We do that through being a people who:

- **discover** Jesus through passionate worship & radical hospitality
- **connect** in groups growing intentional faith development & authentic faith sharing
- **impact** through hands-on projects developing risk-taking mission and service & extravagant generosity

As we have the past 125 years, we will continue to:

- express a generous orthodoxy, affirming the tenets of the Apostle's Creed
- teach the Holy Scripture
- reach future generations (focusing on ministry to children, youth, & young adults)
- be not just hearers of the word, but doers of the word. We want to be living examples of Jesus' injunction in John 15:12 "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you."

As we move into the future, we want to be a part of a revitalized Methodism, one that leaves behind the rancor and division of the past fifty years, and moves into a new season of ministry and fruitfulness. We recognize that in this season of uncertainty, our human efforts and understandings are imperfect and dependent on the power of the Holy Spirit to guide us.

The most important thing we can do in this hour is **to pray for wisdom and direction**. We know that Jesus is with us and is praying for us even now. Jesus prayed that we may be one and that we bear much fruit. This is what it means to be a church where many people, with many perspectives, sit at the table together and seek to live as followers of Jesus together!

Serving Jesus with You,

Legacy's Administrative Team, Pastors and Staff

Going Forward:

Pray • Learn • Ask Anything • Listen Well • Freely Disagree • Love Regardless

1) Stay UMC

- 1) No change to historic doctrines such as Jesus' birth, death and resurrection
- 2) No church vote required
- 3) One of the reasons given to disaffiliate is uneven application of Discipline statements, restrictions, and requirements regarding historic doctrines, human sexuality and others. However, they are more upheld across the whole worldwide denomination than not.
- 4) Given the global makeup of the UMC & upcoming Judicial Council decisions, it is unknown if there will be any human sexuality shifts at the 2024 General Conference
- 5) There is no financial cost to remain where we are. Apportionments continue at 14% of general offerings, with the stated goal of 10% in coming years

2) Go GMC, Leave UMC

- 1) The Global Methodist Church is a new traditionalist denomination that will keep to the current UMC standards regarding historic doctrines and human sexuality, while hoping to simplify church structure and increase accountability
- 2) Vote required of 67% of congregation to change denominations
- 3) GMC is still in infancy. Convening conference by end of 2023. Health and pension starting January 1. A provisional annual conference exists in Dakotas & Minnesota. IRS recognized 501c3 status. It is unclear who to contact in our region when a church needs a pastor or what, if any, conference support will be available
- 4) There is a financial cost, including paying back recent grants (i.e. Legacy South), estimating \$100,000, to change denominations. GMC apportionments start at 4%.
- 5) Unclear how global the denomination will be; forming in America, Europe & Philippines

3) Become Independent, Leave UMC

- 1) Legacy would be entirely its own entity, needing to create completely new structures for accountability and pastoral support - can be a permanent or transitional phase
- 2) It gives Legacy the most freedom but is the most work in behind the scenes setup and structure - all on our own for pastoral recruitment, accountability, support, etc.
- 3) The cost to depart in this pathway is the same as #2 as well as an all-church vote of 67% to support the move
- 4) An independent Methodist Church is, by our history, not how Methodists do church.
- 5) Loss of legal support and institutional checks and balances with no broader connection.

4) Join an Emerging Methodist Network, Likely Leave UMC & Other Notes

- 1) New Methodist networks, such as The Foundry and The Methodist Collegiate Church, have emerged.
- 2) The denominational options will be a changing dynamic for years to come
- 3) One disaffiliation pathway expires December 31, 2023 with our conference looking to extend it until December 31, 2024 - we will know this in June 2023
- 4) Health, retirement and benefits for pastors and staff can continue with changes with our current provider, Wespeth, under options 2-4
- 5) Current pastors could choose to stay in the UMC which means Legacy would have to find and hire pastors independently with no conference or network support.