



Centenary United Methodist Church
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February 13, 2023

Dear Centenary Family,

We want to give you an update from the Discernment Team which was tasked by the Administrative Council to prayerfully discern God's direction for Centenary and our status as a United Methodist Church. We have met the last three Sunday afternoons and will continue to meet for several more Sundays. We are reading and discussing the book "Pursuing God's Will Together" by Ruth Haley Barton. We strongly encourage our congregation to read this book along with us and join us in discerning God's will for Centenary. Decision making and spiritual discernment are two very different things. One is human and one is divine.

We all come to the table with our own thoughts and feelings regarding the turmoil in the United Methodist Church. Our goal as a discernment team is to ask God to make us indifferent to anything but His will relative to the matter we are gathered to discern. This is especially challenging since we are facing an outcome that really matters to us. Each one of us loves our church. We as a team and as a congregation feel the weight of the decision Centenary may need to make and how it will affect our members, community and future.

The question our team is asking is: **How does God want to lead Centenary in our affiliation as a UMC?** Of course we have many other questions but feel this is the most important one we need to be discerning. We encourage all of you to lift this question up in prayer and seek God's direction for our church. We are stronger as a praying community listening for God and trusting God to speak to us.

We encourage you to gather information, from both perspectives, regarding the differences of opinion in the UMC. Rev Rob Renfroe released a series of six videos with his views on why churches should disaffiliate from the UMC. Rev Adam Hamilton responded to each of those six videos with his views on why churches should remain UMC. Both of these pastors are leaders in this debate. All these videos can be found on YouTube and represent the opinions of both sides. If you choose to watch them, we recommend you watch the videos in sequence starting with video 1 from Rob Renfroe followed by video 1 from Adam Hamilton. Each video is about 12-15 minutes in length. Below are links that should take you to each of the six videos from each Pastor.

Rev. Rob Renfroe:

<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL0tdBSkYKNUka0KiJ28rSUM1H1hdc3MUu>

Rev. Adam Hamilton

<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLYx1IY4ptubjGvzbjKkKJ8otHGHAht5EXn>

There is also a FAQ page provided by the Missouri UMC Conference that responds to many of the questions we are hearing. The link is <https://www.moumethodist.org/disaffiliation-faqs>.

We recognize that there is much information available on the internet regarding the disagreement within the UMC and you can find content to support whichever way you are leaning. We ask all our members to educate themselves thoroughly and understand both sides of the conflict. Then ask God how He wants to lead Centenary in our affiliation as a UMC?

Bishop Bob Farr will be preaching at both services this Sunday, February 19. He will also be available at 2:00pm that same day in the sanctuary to speak to our congregation and answer questions submitted on our website. Questions can be submitted to the Discernment Team in advance at our website www.centenarynow.org Click on the discernment button on our homepage.

In closing, the goal of our team is discerning God's leading regarding the future of Centenary. We hope you will join us in praying for God to speak into our outcome. We also realize we are only eight people in a congregation of many and ultimately the members of Centenary church will have a voice in our steps moving forward.

In Christ's Love,

Gary Brookover

Sherry Brookover

Frances Gould

Cherie Henson

Kristi Howard

Scott McClanahan

Nathan Meece

Bob Williamson