

Helps to navigate through the storm



1

The reasons we are meeting

- Become as clear as we can about the information
- Ask questions and hear responses
- Find out where to look for find information
- Know that you are not alone

2

These are not reasons we are meeting

- Debate scripture, doctrine or *Discipline*
- Convince each other whether to leave or stay

3

Guidelines for Discussion

- Listen respectfully, without interrupting.
- Listen actively and with an ear to understanding others' views.
- Criticize ideas, not individuals.
- Commit to learning, not debating. ...
- Avoid blame, speculation, and inflammatory language.
- Allow everyone the chance to speak.

4

This is what we're going to do

- Reflect on Scripture and pray
- Watch the *Blessing One Another* Video
- Address your questions and talk with each other
- Conclude and depart, blessed by God
- ...in 30 minutes to 2 hours

5

How do we figure this out?

First step for discernment

1. Discuss your congregation's values, direction for ministry, goals for mission, and the way your congregation will be in ministry with LGBTQ+ persons.
 - a. Town Hall meetings
 - b. Coffees and small groups
 - c. Governance bodies (Council or Leadership Team...)

6

How do we figure this out?

Discernment Questions

- What is the primary focus of your life as a Christian?
- How do you define a disciple of Jesus Christ?
- What are your primary values as a congregation?
- How open are you to being a part of a denomination that is spacious and open to many ideas?
- Can you participate in a congregation with whom you disagree?
- Do you fully understand the impact on property ownership, clergy pensions, and health care if your church leaves?
- What is the source of your information? Does it offer different perspectives so you can make a fully informed decision?
- How can we continue to bless one another even in disagreement?

7

How do we figure this out?

Second step for discernment

- Do research:
 - Pension Questions: <https://www.wespath.org/about-wespath/wayforwardwespathfaq>
 - United Methodist plans: <https://michiganumc.org/the-future-of-the-umc/>
 - Global Methodist plans: <https://globalmethodist.org/>
 - Disaffiliation, current terms: <https://michiganumc.org/resources/local-church/trustees/disaffiliation/>

8

How do we figure this out?

Third step for discernment

- Town Hall on the future direction for the local church

9

How do we figure this out?

Fourth step for discernment

- Church Council/Leadership Team determines whether to call a church conference.
 - If so, will it be for pre-GCS 2024 or following?
 - If before GCS 2024, contact the District Superintendent

10

How do we figure this out?

Final step for discernment

- Revisit the Questions for Discernment
- If pre-GCS 2024, current rules and expectations apply
- If pre-GCS 2024, 2/3 majority vote is mandatory for disaffiliation and separation to unite with GMC

11