

Grace UMC Family,

Your Church Council voted on June 27th to ask our United Methodist District Superintendent (DS) to schedule a Church Conference, where a vote will be taken over if we will or will not disaffiliate from the United Methodist Church. I'm sure a lot of questions arise over this, so we hope this letter is helpful toward answering some of your questions.

What is a Church Conference? Who can vote?

A church conference is a meeting of professing members of the local church, presided over by the DS or a representative, for a particular task. In this case, the sole task is a vote of disaffiliation. A 66.7% super majority is needed for disaffiliation. While the results will grant immediate clarity for our church, it will not be made official until the West Ohio Annual Conference votes to accept the disaffiliation on November 19th, 2022.

Do all churches need to vote to disaffiliate?

No. Our Council believes that for the sake of our present and future mission, a vote is in order.

Why, then, are we calling for a vote?

The ongoing conflict over foundational principles and theological divisions within the United Methodist Church have intensified over the last few months, leaving many UMC-affiliated churches wondering what the future holds.

Things have now reached a point where each congregation can make decisions about remaining within the United Methodist Church or disaffiliating for another preferred future. The Council believes our congregation is healthy enough to have this conversation openly and respectfully. We also believe it is healthy for us to make an active choice to either stay UMC or disaffiliate. If the church chooses to disaffiliate from the UMC, options for what we do next will be shared in detail at the upcoming information session.

Why Now?

These **conflicts and divisions are a distraction** to our vision, mission, and ministry of *Living in Faith. Growing Disciples. Restoring Lives.* Moreover, we have dreams and plans for our ministry, and our facility, which everyone is eager to see become a reality. Yet mobilizing toward our future is not wise until we first address our denominational future.

What's Next?

This is an important issue—both spiritually and legally—that requires prayerful thought and discernment. You likely have many questions about what staying with the UMC or disaffiliating means to Grace Church. The Church Council feels strongly that every aspect of this process be transparent, inclusive, and informed. We will add resources to our [web site](#) throughout this fall that will continue to share perspectives and resources necessary to help you make a decision. In addition, we will hold three information meetings to provide information and answer questions with childcare provided for the face-to-face gatherings. Each meeting will be identical so no

need to attend more than one. A straw poll will be conducted at the conclusion of each info session so as to get a pulse on the congregation's wishes. Please mark your calendar for **one** of these 3:

INFO SESSION 1 - Wednesday Sept 7, 6:30 pm in the FLC

INFO SESSION 2 - Sunday, Sept 11, 9:15 am in the Sanctuary

INFO SESSION 3 - ZOOM, Tuesday, Sept 13, 6:30 pm

When will we officially vote?

The vote on whether or not to disaffiliate from the UMC is not currently scheduled but we anticipate a late September/early October. This timeline is aggressive but necessary as the West Ohio Conference has scheduled a special Annual Conference to address "disaffiliating churches" for November 19, 2022. The West Ohio Conference put forth an exhaustive checklist and deadlines to complete the necessary steps by October 31, 2022 in preparation for that special Annual Conference.

Can I still join the church?

Yes. If you are interested in becoming a member, contact office@gracechurchperrysburg.com before August 30. We will make sure we bring in new members prior to any official vote. All members, as always, are expected to be faithful to their covenant to the church with their gifts, presence, service, witness, and prayers.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter concerning our church's future. We know that everyone is looking to be faithful and obedient to God in this process. So continue in prayer for one another, draw near to Jesus, listen for the Spirit's promptings and anchor yourself in Scripture.

God is with us friends!

Church Council