

# Frequently Asked Questions on SUMC Survey and the Way Forward

## Questions about Survey and Discernment Process

### **Why does the survey require my name and email address?**

*For any survey around disaffiliation to be helpful in our shared discernment, we need a way to verify a person's identity and relationship to our church family. Anonymous online surveys would surely have greater participation, but the information provided would not be useful. Anonymous surveys provide no way to prevent multiple entries, help with vetting engagement and participation of actual professing members, or real impact on others who participate regularly in our faith community.*

### **Why is the survey open to both professing members and regular attendees?**

*It was determined that we would like to hear from all those who participate in the life of our church's mission and ministry, knowing that in every local church there are always varying levels of participation and commitment. Unlike a Church Conference where only professing members would be able to vote, this unofficial and non-binding survey seeks to learn more about the impact of any future decision on all who are a currently a part of our larger outreach and ministry.*

### **Who will see my response, feedback, and the comments that I submit with my survey?**

*Our leadership is aware that the subject matter is sensitive and that a willingness to share your personal convictions and discernment requires a certain level of honesty and vulnerability. For that reason, only pastoral leadership and one of our technical staff will see your submissions. Many have already spoken publicly about their convictions, but we will remain committed to letting each person speak for themselves and share with others in our church family when they so choose.*

### **Is there a deadline for when survey submissions will be complete?**

Yes. We will leave the survey link up through August 18<sup>th</sup>, so anyone who has not filled it out yet still has time to pray, discern and fill it out before then.

### **What will be done with the final results of the survey?**

The results, without names attached, will be reported to our next regular Church Council meeting, currently scheduled for August 25<sup>th</sup> at 7PM. According to the NC Conference disaffiliation team, it is only the Church Council that is authorized to submit a request to the District Superintendent if they determine the need to ask that the D.S. to schedule a Church Conference on disaffiliation.

### **I know members and regular attendees who do not have email addresses and who are not able to fill out online surveys. How can they participate?**

*We have printed surveys available in the gathering spaces on Sundays and in the church office during the week. If anyone needs assistance getting one to submit by hand or in filling one out online, please call the church office.*

**I still have trouble understanding. If nothing has changed in our Book of Discipline on human sexuality, why are we focusing on this issue now?**

*Some traditionalists believe that a preemptive decision to leave the UMC now is preferable to waiting until the 2024 General Conference to see what decisions may or may not be made there or at other future GC's in the quadrennial gatherings to come.*

**What was the purpose of the two INFO sessions that we held at SUMC?**

*The two sessions we held on July 6<sup>th</sup> and July 13<sup>th</sup> were requested by Church Council and intended to be information sessions on the disaffiliation process and considerations that are specific to SUMC. Though there was time reserved at the end of both meetings for member comments and questions, these first two sessions were not designed to be panel discussions, a town hall style gathering, or a bible study on human sexuality. Our church leadership will continue to listen and discern additional ways we might continue to help our church family in this season of discernment.*

**Why was there not more information shared about the emerging Global Methodist Church?**

*The information sessions were not designed to focus on the emerging GMC or on other denominations that former UM Churches might desire to affiliate with after leaving the United Methodist Church. It is also probably better to hear that perspective from those who are advocating and actively pursuing that path themselves. For more information on the Wesley Covenant Association or the emerging Global Methodist Church, please go to their websites where you will find information, videos, and perspectives from those who are seeking to move that direction.*