

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Why has Salem Church decided to pursue withdrawal from the UMC organization?**

The denomination has become ungovernable. There is ongoing and increasing infidelity to covenantal beliefs and doctrine. While bishops and pastors alike promise allegiance to these covenants upon appointment (their assignment to a specific, local church), those leading the church and charged with enforcing accountability are unwilling or unable to hold each other accountable.

We have a language problem and have lost shared meaning on important terms. We often use the same words, cite the same Scriptures, quote the same Wesley sermons, and even pledge allegiance to the same Book of Discipline (our denominational constitution). Yet, because we don't have a common understanding of what the words mean, we're living entirely different expressions of faith.

We have different theologies: We disagree on the nature, role, and authority of Scripture. We disagree on the nature, role, and authority of Jesus. We disagree on the nature of sin and our individual need for atonement. We disagree on the ongoing work of sanctification.

### **What are the theological foundations that Salem Church upholds that drive the need to withdraw?**

We believe the Bible is true and authoritative, which has been the traditional Christian and Methodist position. ***However, many within the denomination believe and teach that Scripture can be divided and partially ignored or that experience takes precedence over Scripture.***

We believe Jesus is the one and only Son of God, born of the virgin Mary, crucified at the cross and was dead and buried—and that He rose from the dead on the third day, He ascended to heaven, and He now sits on a throne to the right of God the Father. Christ is risen, and He will come again. These too are the beliefs of traditional Methodism. ***Yet, some churches teach the incarnation, virgin birth, or resurrection of Jesus did not happen.***

We believe sin is personal, that it separates us from a relationship with God, needs to be atoned for, and is forgiven when we place our faith in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. We must be born again and repent of our sins to achieve salvation. These are the traditional beliefs of Christianity and Methodism. ***Yet, some within the denomination minimize personal sin or teach it is corrected solely through acts of death and mercy. Many even teach salvation is universal with no need for repentance or Jesus' atonement.***

We believe in the ongoing work of sanctification as the work of the Holy Spirit that continues saving us from sin and delivering us into new life. Although this too is a traditional Methodist belief, ***other churches within the denomination resist the continuing work of the Spirit and deny the need for sanctification.***

We believe it's time for us to reclaim these theological roots and rediscover the practices that fueled Methodist revival. It's time to leave the division behind us and go forth with our mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ who worship passionately, love extravagantly, and witness boldly.

**What happens to our name/affiliation if we leave the UMC organization?**

We have several options that will be discussed in the future to determine what is the best path for Salem's future ministry. Those options can include but are not limited to aligning with the newly formed Global Methodist Church, the Free Methodist Church, or becoming an independent not-for-profit ministry.

**Will the withdrawal affect church staff, pastors and leadership?**

Withdrawal may or may not result in a pastoral change. The pastor may decide to remain in the UMC system, and would therefore leave our congregation by July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023. All other church staff and leadership would remain the same.

**How will withdrawal affect our ministries?**

Withdrawal will not affect our ministry operations or current programs, but mission projects will be more localized and/or joined with other approved organizations other than the UMC world-wide projects.

**What will happen to our building and assets if we disaffiliate with the UMC?**

Paragraph 2553 in the current Book of Discipline allows for withdrawal to include ownership of buildings, land, and property within. Upon separation, we will own all of these things outright. This provision ends December 30, 2023.

**When do we expect withdrawal to be complete?**

After our church votes to withdraw from the UMC, the Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church must formally vote to affirm. At this time, we believe June 30, 2023 would be the process to be complete.

**What changes can we expect after withdrawal?**

The day-to-day operations of our church will remain the same. The only changes will be seen on the signage and branding with the name change.

**What is the general process for how withdrawal happens?**

Our Church Leadership has requested the district call a church conference for our church membership to vote on withdrawal. The superintendent has set the date for the church conference to be held INSERT DATE and TIME. At the church conference, though everyone is welcome to attend, only church members who are bodily present can vote. Upon a two-thirds affirmative vote of those members present and voting, the annual conference and our church will complete the withdrawal process. To become a member, email Lori Eaton (secretary@salemccass.org) or call the church office (419-423-9751).

Attached are the following helpful informational items:

1. A history of how the church leadership has handled the disaffiliation process.
2. A list of video and article resources that present both sides of the issue.