



## **SODDY UMC GOALS AND IDEAS**

For the first half of this year, the Administrative Board and interested church attendees/members met monthly for a process of reflection, evaluation, and goal-setting for the future. What you'll see on the next few pages is the list of goals and ideas that were generated from those meetings.

This is not an exhaustive list. You may have a suggestion for a goal or an idea. The Administrative Board welcomes your input. One reason I'm including the list here in the newsletter is so that everyone has a chance to see what was discussed. It's also important to note that we *are not* going to do everything on this list. It's the Board's intention to have no more than three (3) goals to work toward. When those are accomplished, additional goals can be added. Some of the items on the list we might be able to jump on immediately; others may take months or even years.

As I have noted in numerous sermons, we all know that our church has not been growing as we would like. We know we're an aging congregation. We know we're financially secure (a blessing that *many* churches do not have!), and that we're tied to our two buildings. We have a strong sense of history and tradition. We value and honor God's Word. And we have dedicated servants who see that the business of the church is handled efficiently and effectively.

As we emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic and move farther away from it,

*continued*

### ***From Pastor Todd, continued***

we now need to focus on where the church is going. We need to help create the preferred future that we want—and that we believe God wants—for Soddy United Methodist Church. It won't happen overnight, and we may end up trying different things to see what works best or what fits with our church culture. That is where our list of goals and ideas come in.

But something that I've repeatedly told the Board is that no matter what goals the church chooses, it is the responsibility of the *congregation* to see goals fulfilled. The pastor cannot fulfill congregational goals. And it is not the responsibility of a single committee or team or work area. *The congregation as a whole must take ownership of, and responsibility for, achieving the goals developed.* I can help facilitate and lead the process. I can preach, teach, and train you to reach your goals, as Ephesians 4:11-13 describes. But goals will only be achieved to the extent that the congregation accepts responsibility for them. Therefore, if an idea or a goal doesn't resonate with the congregation, then it's almost inevitable that it won't be successful.

That is another reason why I want to share the things that emerged from our meetings. As you look over this list, you may find something that sparks your interest more than others. You may discover something that you would like to be involved in. That is all part of the process, and why we welcome input. It will do no good for the Board to implement a goal if the church as a whole is lukewarm or disinterested in it. What we pursue should be things that fire our imagination, that make our eyes light up and our hearts beat faster.

Above all, we want to bathe our goals and ideas in prayer so that we are in line with God's will to the best of our understanding. God is not finished with our church and he still has work for us to do. I invite you to join me and the Administrative Board in praying for our church, our leadership, and our goals as we move forward.

## **GOALS AND IDEAS**

(as derived from January – May 2022 Administrative Board / congregational meetings)

### **■ OUTREACH**

- Develop a community “prayer wall / prayer box” for the parking lot
- Develop a “virtual” prayer wall
- Have a Mother's Day Out program for the community once a week
- Offer after-school care every day during the school year
- Have a seniors breakfast once a month
- Develop a means of discovering what needs exist in the surrounding community, and finding ways to address those needs that we're uniquely situated to address

***continued***

■ **PARTICIPATE IN COMMUNITY EVENTS**

- Fourth of July, parades, activities, etc.

■ **OFFER SEASONAL ACTIVITIES** (under the tree in the playground)

- Concerts, guest speakers / presentations, children's activities, etc.
- Ice cream truck

■ **HIRE A TECHNOLOGY EXPERT**

- Live stream worship services for us
- Maintain the church web site

■ **DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A STEPHEN MINISTRIES PROGRAM**

[www.stephenministries.org](http://www.stephenministries.org)

- Equip congregation members to provide one-to-one Christian care to people who are hurting
- The more people who are trained in congregational care, the easier it is for everyone and more care can be available

■ **KEEP FROM LOSING CURRENT MEMBERS and ATTRACT NEW MEMBERS**

- Create a taskforce for the purpose of maintaining ongoing contact with existing members

■ **DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT SMALL GROUPS**

- Groups could be ongoing or time-limited (fall / spring)
- Pastor Todd has experience developing small groups
- Groups could meet on different nights, in different places, throughout the week, depending on each group's preferences

■ **HAVE A VAN AVAILABLE FOR US TO USE**

- Could be used for senior outings, mission trips, youth activities, etc.
- Could be used for pickups / drop offs

■ **HIRE A MINISTRY DIRECTOR**

- Someone who could plan, organize, and oversee mission trips, outings, events, etc.
- Would work in conjunction with existing ministry staff / volunteers

*From Pastor Todd, continued*

■ **PUT OUT BANNERS / SIGNS / ADVERTISING FOR THE CHURCH**

■ **PROVIDE SERVICES FOR THE COMMUNITY**

- Offer such things as sewing days, cooking days, health days, etc.

■ **VISIT THE NURSING HOME**

- Reach out to the nursing home nurses, staff, aides, etc.

■ **OFFER FREE GIVEAWAYS IN THE COMMUNITY**

- This could include things such as free water at the ball fields, free coffee or hot chocolate at winter events, etc.
- Get t-shirts made identifying Soddy UMC; wear them during giveaways

■ **DEVELOP ONGOING PRAYER GROUPS**

- Could be incorporated into the small group idea
- Groups could meet on different nights, in different places, throughout the week, depending on each group's preferences



**Pastor Todd will be in Virginia visiting his parents from July 11th—18th.** *If you have any special needs during that time please contact Kathy Jones or Cindy Cunnyingham.* Cindy preach and lead worship on Sunday, July 17th.



## **CURRENT INFORMATION ON THE PROCESS FOR UNITED METHODIST CHURCHES WISHING TO DISAFFILIATE FROM THE DENOMINATION**

As we all know, our denomination has been going through a lot of upheaval over the last few years. There's no shortage of misinformation regarding the future of the denomination and the May 1 launch of the conservative Global Methodist Church. What follows is the most current information on the disaffiliation process that was shared by Pastor Todd at the June 14 informational meeting. It is presented here simply for your information and benefit.

**PASTOR TODD HAS NOT BEEN APPROACHED BY ANYONE IN THE CONGREGATION WISHING TO DISAFFILIATE. HE IS NOT AWARE OF ANYONE IN CHURCH LEADERSHIP WHO HAS BEEN APPROACHED REGARDING DISAFFILIATION.** *Therefore, this is merely for informational purposes only.*

**NEW ¶ 2553 in the United Methodist Book of Discipline, page 776.**

**THIS NEW PARAGRAPH BECAME EFFECTIVE AT THE CLOSE OF THE SPECIAL CALLED 2019 GENERAL CONFERENCE. IT WILL EXPIRE AT MIDNIGHT ON DECEMBER 31, 2023.**

### **¶ 2553. Disaffiliation of a Local Church Over Issues Related to Human Sexuality—**

**1. Basis**—Because of the current deep conflict within The United Methodist Church around issues of human sexuality, a local church shall have a limited right, under the provisions of this paragraph, to disaffiliate from the denomination for reasons of conscience regarding a change in the requirements and provisions of the *Book of Discipline* related to the practice of homosexuality or the ordination or marriage of self-avowed practicing homosexuals as resolved and adopted by the 2019 General Conference, or the actions or inactions of its annual conference related to these issues which follow.

**2. Time Limits**—The choice by a local church to disaffiliate with The United Methodist Church under this paragraph shall be made in sufficient time for the process for exiting the denomination to be complete prior to December 31, 2023. The provisions of ¶ 2553 expire on December 31, 2023 and shall not be used after that date.

**3. Decision Making Process**—The church conference shall be conducted in accordance with ¶ 248 and shall be held within one hundred twenty (120) days after the district superintendent calls for the church conference. In addition to the provisions of ¶ 246.8, special attention



shall be made to give broad notice to the full professing membership of the local church regarding the time and place of a church conference called for this purpose and to use all means necessary, including electronic communication where possible, to communicate. The decision to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the professing members of the local church present at the church conference.

**4. Process Following Decision to Disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church**—If the church conference votes to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church, the terms and conditions for that disaffiliation shall be established by the board of trustees of the applicable annual conference, with the advice of the cabinet, the annual conference treasurer, the annual conference benefits officer, the director of connectional ministries, and the annual conference chancellor. The terms and conditions, including the effective date of disaffiliation, shall be memorialized in a binding Disaffiliation Agreement between the annual conference and the trustees of the local church, acting on behalf of the members. That agreement must be consistent with the following provisions:

- a) *Standard Terms of the Disaffiliation Agreement.* The General Council on Finance and Administration shall develop a standard form for Disaffiliation Agreements under this paragraph to protect The United Methodist Church as set forth in ¶ 807.9. The agreement shall include a recognition of the validity and applicability of ¶ 2501, notwithstanding the release of property therefrom. Annual conferences may develop additional standard terms that are not inconsistent with the standard form of this paragraph.
- b) *Apportionments.* The local church shall pay any unpaid apportionments for the 12 months prior to disaffiliation, as well as an additional 12 months of apportionments.
- c) *Property.* A disaffiliating local church shall have the right to retain its real and personal, tangible and intangible property. All transfers of property shall be made prior to disaffiliation. All costs for transfer of title or other legal work shall be borne by the disaffiliating local church.
- d) *Pension Liabilities.* The local church shall contribute withdrawal liability in an amount equal to its pro rata share of any aggregate unfunded pension obligations to the annual conference. The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits shall determine the aggregate funding obligations of the annual conference using market factors similar to a commercial annuity provider, from which the annual conference will

determine the local church's share.

e) *Other Liabilities.* The local church shall satisfy all other debts, loans, and liabilities, or assign and transfer them to its new entity, prior to disaffiliation.

f) *Payment Terms.* Payment shall occur prior to the effective date of departure.

g) *Disaffiliating Churches Continuing as Plan Sponsors of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits Plans.*

The United Methodist Church believes that a local church disaffiliating under ¶ 2553 shall continue to share common religious bonds and convictions with The United Methodist Church based on shared Wesleyan theology and tradition and Methodist roots, unless the local church expressly resolves to the contrary. As such, a local church disaffiliating under ¶ 2553 shall continue to be eligible to sponsor voluntary employee benefit plans through the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits under ¶ 1504.2, subject to the applicable terms and conditions of the plans.

h) Once the disaffiliating local church has reimbursed the applicable annual conference for all funds due under the agreement, and provided that there are no other outstanding liabilities or claims against The United Methodist Church as a result of the disaffiliation, in consideration of the provisions of this paragraph, the applicable annual conference shall release any claims that it may have under ¶ 2501 and other paragraphs of *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* commonly referred to as the trust clause, or under the agreement.

### **AFFILIATION / DISAFFILIATION OF THE LOCAL CHURCH**

The Holston Annual Conference will be utilizing a process of affiliation/ disaffiliation through paragraph 2553 (*Disaffiliation of a Local Church Over Issues Related to Human Sexuality*) of the *Book of Discipline*. With the recent decision by the Judicial Council, no statement regarding “reasons of conscience” will be required by the Annual Conference and the Local Church will obtain full ownership of real property upon completion of the process of disaffiliation and final vote of the Annual Conference.

The following are the steps to be completed 90 days before the 2023 Holston Annual Conference:

- **Signed Affiliation/Disaffiliation Request from the Local Church**
- **Minimum of three (3) months spiritual discernment process.**
- **Called Church Conference Vote** (a 2/3 majority of professing members present and voting is required for passage)

## ■ **Payment of Local Church Obligations**

Conference tithes and liabilities and district askings for the current year and the following year. Any unpaid tithes for the 24 months immediately prior to the Disaffiliation date. Unfunded pension liability share as determined by the conference treasurer and Wespath. Unpaid clergy and lay benefits (pension, health insurance, disability/death) owed by the Local Church.

## **UNITED METHODIST CHURCH DISAFFILIATION FAQs**

### **1. ARE THERE WAYS TO LEAVE THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OTHER THAN SECTION 2553?**

Individuals, of course, may choose to leave the United Methodist Church whenever they discern that they are called to fulfill their Christian journey in another local church or denomination without necessarily having to follow a prescribed process in *The United Methodist Book of Discipline*.

However, when an entire local church is considering disaffiliation from the United Methodist Church there are many more complicated issues that need to be addressed, and so a formal process of disaffiliation has been designed to do that in a formal and appropriate manner.

Sec. 2553 was created specifically to address the decision to disaffiliate because of the ongoing conflict on the issue of human sexuality that is driving some churches to reconsider their relationship with The United Methodist Church.

*The Book of Discipline* also provides different procedures for local churches to formally change their relationship with The United Methodist Church when, for example, the local church decides to merge with another local church in another denomination (*BOD* Sec. 2547), when it decides to join a pan-Methodist or other denomination (*BOD* Sec. 2548), or when the local church closes (*BOD* Sec. 2549). These other provisions were created at times throughout our history to address specific scenarios that might or might not be relevant today.

However, Section 2553 was created specifically to allow a local church to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church, with property held in Trust by The United Methodist Church, in a thoughtful, grace-filled manner to ensure that the separation sets the foundation for continued, if separate, fruitful and productive mission and ministry for everyone involved. Therefore, the process of Sec. 2553 is the most appropriate procedure designed for precisely this purpose at this moment. It will be the process utilized by Holston Conference to assist a local church to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church.



## **UNITED METHODIST CHURCH DISAFFILIATION FAQs**

### **2. IS THERE A DEADLINE FOR TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE DISAFFILIATION PROCESS IN SEC. 2553?**

Yes. Any local church in Holston Conference that has determined that it should disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church must complete this disaffiliation process ***prior to December 31, 2023.***

### **3. WHAT HAPPENS IF A LOCAL CHURCH IS NOT ABLE TO COMPLETE THE DISAFFILIATION PROCESS PRIOR TO DECEMBER 31, 2023?**

Because Sec. 2553 has a validity expiration date, the disaffiliation process will automatically terminate if a local church is not able to complete the process prior to December 31, 2023. If a local church meets one of the other provisions of the *Book of Discipline*, those other options may be considered on a case-by-case basis after December 31, 2023.

### **4. WHAT OTHER DEADLINES NEED TO BE CONSIDERED?**

The disaffiliation process has several important timeframes to be considered. These are outlined in the disaffiliation packet (that will be provided to churches seeking disaffiliation). However, please keep in mind that a local church that has discerned that disaffiliation is the proper step must have its decision approved by Holston Annual Conference before any property can be transferred. Therefore, a disaffiliating church needs to be ready for a vote on its request by Annual Conference in 2023. Specific details about what needs to be accomplished before the 2023 Annual Conference will be included in the disaffiliation packet.

### **5. IS THERE AN ADVANTAGE TO USING ONE OF THE OTHER PROVISIONS IN THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE TO DISAFFILIATE FROM THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH?**

Sec. 2553 is the only provision in the *Book of Discipline* that expressly provides a formal process for disaffiliation. Other provisions may or may not be applicable to a particular church's unique circumstances, but the same terms and obligations, such as the requirement to pay unfunded pensions and to go through a spiritual discernment process would apply regardless of which provision might be invoked. Sec. 2553 also expressly provides a legal right and process for a local church to acquire property that it presently only holds in Trust for the United Methodist Church. But since none of the other provisions in the *Book of Discipline* expressly provides a disaffiliation process, Sec. 2553 is the appropriate process to use if a local church decides that it wants to disaffiliate from the United Methodist Church.

### **6. IS THERE A QUICKER WAY TO COMPLETE THE DISAFFILIATION PROCESS IF THAT IS WHAT A CHURCH DECIDES TO DO?**

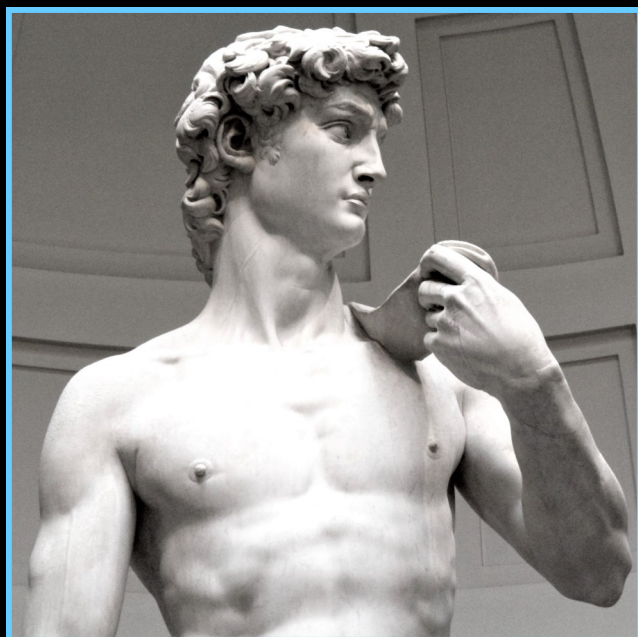
One of the reasons the Bishop and Cabinet have consented only to

using Sec. 2553 through 2023 is that it covers all of the various scenarios under which a church might disaffiliate from the United Methodist Church. For example, a church that discerns a need to become independent would not be able to use Sec. 2548.2. By allowing all churches the same opportunity under the same set of terms and procedures will expedite the process in a fair, consistent, and efficient manner throughout Holston Conference.

## **7. WHAT CAN A LOCAL CHURCH DO TO MAKE SURE THAT IT HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO DISAFFILIATE FROM THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH IN A TIMELY MANNER UNDER SEC. 2553?**

We are all united by Christ to serve through worship, mission, and ministry. If a local church discerns that it can better fulfill its mission by separating from the United Methodist Church, Holston Conference will help guide the church through the disaffiliation process in a timely manner because we ultimately all share the same goal of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world in the most effective way possible, even if separated.

The spiritual discernment process is a critical step in the process because it will ensure that the local church, through all of its members, makes a fully informed and spiritually guided decision of great significance. Working closely with your District Superintendent to plan ahead and complete the steps in the process will help make certain the process is a smooth and efficient one. This will also help make sure that if the path of disaffiliation is chosen, the local church will be able to have its request voted on by Annual Conference before the end of 2023.



# COMING IN SEPTEMBER!

## The Life of David:

SHEPHERD · SEEKER · SINNER · SOVEREIGN

Pastor Todd's Bible study begins  
Tuesday, September 13, at 6:00 p.m.

# July Birthdays

- 1 Hazel Grace Gardener  
Rod Musgrave
- 7 Kyle Anderson
- 8 Vicki Hardesty
- 10 Patsy Irwin
- 11 Mike Anderson  
Trudy Harper
- 15 Arnie Stulce
- 21 Tripp Mullins
- 24 Virginia Gill  
Thomas Wood  
Ron Jordan
- 26 Paige Hendrix  
Preston Hendrix

# July Anniversaries

- 17 Joseph & Marti Hendrix
- 29 Sid & Vivian Parrott

“

**“Those that truly love,  
have roots that grow towards  
each other underground. And  
when all the pretty blossoms  
have fallen from their branches,  
they find that they are one tree  
and not two.”**

**~ Louis de Bernières**

”



# August Birthdays

- 5 Nell Smith
- 11 Gene Elliott
- 12 Ann Reahard
- 13 Paul Ed Parrott  
Brynlie Dotson
- 16 Brody Dotson  
Linda Reagan
- 17 Michelle Musgrave
- 18 Elena Mullins
- 20 Kristen Woodall
- 21 JoAnne Posey  
Caleb Nelson
- 26 Allison Ellis

# August Anniversaries

- 1 Carlos & Barbara Wilson
- 2 Paul Ed and Suzanne Parrott
- 14 Skip and Martha Sheeks
- 25 Kay & Vicki Hardesty

“

**A birthday is a new beginning -  
A birthday is the first day of another  
lovely year,  
A year of new tomorrows that is shining,  
bright and clear,  
A year of possibilities as endless as the  
sky,  
and a chance to meet the challenges  
in everything you try.**

”



**Sunday, July 3rd**

**SERMON SERIES: THE MAN WHO WOULD BE KING**

*"Taking Matters Into Our Own Hands"*

**YOUTH (6:00 PM)**

**Monday, July 4th**

**INDEPENDENCE DAY**

**Tuesday, July 5th**

**Marthas & Marys Bible study**

*(by the lake—fellowship hall in case of rain)*

**Sunday, July 10th**

**SERMON SERIES: THE MAN WHO WOULD BE KING**

*"To Realize And Return"*

**YOUTH (6:00 PM)**

**JULY 11th - 18th**

**PASTOR TODD WILL BE VISITING FAMILY  
IN VIRGINIA**

**Monday, July 11th**

**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL**

**Tuesday, July 12th**

**Marthas & Marys Bible study**

*(by the lake—fellowship hall in case of rain)*

**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL**

**Wednesday, July 13th**

**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL**

**Thursday, July 14th**

**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL**

**Sunday, July 17th**

**GUEST SPEAKER: Cindy Cunnyingham**

**YOUTH (6:00 PM)**

**Thursday, July 21st**

*United Methodist Women*

**Sunday, July 24th**

**SERMON SERIES: THE NAMES OF GOD**

*"Elohim—Creator God"*

**YOUTH (6:00 PM)**

**Sunday, July 31st**

**SERMON SERIES: THE NAMES OF GOD**

*"El Roi—The God Who Sees Me"*





**Wednesday, August 3rd**

**POTLUCK DINNER (5:45 PM)**

**Sunday, August 7th**

**SERMON SERIES: THE NAMES OF GOD**

*"Jehovah Jireh—The LORD Our Provider"*

**YOUTH (6:00 PM)**

**Tuesday, August 9th**

**Marthas & Marys Bible study**

*(by the lake—fellowship hall in case of rain)*

**Sunday, August 14th**

**SERMON SERIES: THE NAMES OF GOD**

*"Jehovah Rapha—The LORD Our Healer"*

**ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD meeting**

**YOUTH (6:00 PM)**

**Tuesday, August 16th**

**Marthas & Marys Bible study**

*(by the lake—fellowship hall in case of rain)*

**Thursday, August 18th**

*United Methodist Women*

**Sunday, August 21st**

**SERMON SERIES: THE NAMES OF GOD**

*"Jehovah Nissi—The LORD Our Banner"*

**YOUTH (6:00 PM)**

**Tuesday, August 23rd**

**Marthas & Marys Bible study**

*(by the lake—fellowship hall in case of rain)*

**Sunday, August 28th**

**SERMON SERIES: THE NAMES OF GOD**

*"Jehovah Shalom—The LORD Our Peace"*

**YOUTH (6:00 PM)**

