



# DEKALB FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

— CHURCH WITH A LOVING HEART —

To the full professing membership of First United Methodist Church of DeKalb:

At a called Church Council Meeting on July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022, after a brief presentation by Pastor Amanda, and discussion, the majority of those present expressed their desire to go ahead and begin exploring and discerning how God is calling First United Methodist Church of DeKalb to live out its mission through its denominational affiliation. A process for Future Discernment was adopted by the Church Council on August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022, that initiates a season of prayer, fasting and communication beginning September 1, 2022. This specific discernment process is a means for preparing for the renewal of our Charge at our Annual Charge Conference. As a United Methodist Church, we do this every year in the fall. This year we are electing to be more intentional about preparing for this annual meeting and our continued denominational affiliation.

What is Discernment? Discernment is a period of understanding the congregation, hearing from your membership about their hopes for the future and determining where God is calling your church. This process is grounded in information, communication, and prayer. The 40 days of discernment is set aside for just that: discernment, to inquire of the Lord. So we invite everyone to participate fully. The first step is to begin praying daily using the prayer guide and fasting on Mondays (as you are able). The prayer guide is included, and there will be hard copies available on Sunday at the church. Over the next several weeks we will hold different Town Hall meetings that give our congregation the opportunity to gather, pray, discuss important topics, and listen to God together. These meetings will be available twice, one morning and one evening and also recorded so that everyone has the opportunity to participate.

This discernment will not necessarily end in a vote. It may end in conversation that agrees remaining a United Methodist congregation is best for our church and community. It might, however, culminate in a vote of the church conference (professing membership of the church) asking us to self-determine our future denominational affiliation as a congregation.

A great deal of effort has been put into making this information fully available to our church membership, so be sure to take part in as many of the gatherings as possible and most of all, be diligent in your prayers and fasting during these 40 days. Each member's voice is important, and the church as a whole needs to hear from you.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact either of us for more information.

In the Name of Christ,

Robby Bates – Lay Leader

Rev. Amanda Stratton - Pastor

# CALENDAR

## **Town Hall Meeting 1:** Presentation of Discernment Process

- **Tuesday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 6pm** – Evening Meeting (*Discernment Packets available for pick up*)
- **Wednesday, August 24<sup>th</sup>, 10am** –Daytime Meeting (*Discernment Packets available for pick up*)

**An Evening of Prayer: Wednesday, August 31<sup>st</sup>, 6pm**– Guided Prayer to begin discernment process

## **Thursday, September 1<sup>st</sup> – 40 Day Discernment Period Begins**

*Utilize your Daily Prayer Guide: Be Still and Know*

## **Town Hall Meeting 2:** Legacy Builders: The History and Mission of the Local Church

- **Wednesday, September 14<sup>th</sup>, 7pm** - Evening Meeting
- **Thursday, September 15<sup>th</sup>, 10am** - Daytime Meeting

## **Town Hall Meeting 3:** Connectionalism: Structural Strengths and Concerns

- **Tuesday, September 27<sup>th</sup>, 10am** Daytime Meeting
- **Wednesday, September 28<sup>th</sup>, 7pm** – Evening Meeting

## **Monday, October 10<sup>th</sup> – Final Day of the 40 Day Discernment Period**

## **Town Hall Meeting 4:** Reflective Meeting and Consensus Poll

- **Wednesday, October 12<sup>th</sup>, 7pm**

*Additional Town Hall Meetings may be called between Oct 20<sup>th</sup> -25<sup>th</sup>*

## **Scheduled Charge Conference**

- **Saturday, October 29<sup>th</sup>, 4pm**

---

The Church Council has approved these points of contact for assisting with the Discernment Process:

**Lay Leader:** Robby Bates

**Financial Costs Team:** Becky Rich

**Future Denominational Affiliation Team:** Richard Engle and Randy Pirkey

**Administrative Assistance to the Pastor:** Robyn Anderson, Rhonda Schwab, Julie Youngblood, and Betty Bates