

Minutes from the SIUMC Affiliation Discernment Committee

September 21, 2022 Giddens Chapel

Present: Chris Frohn, Lisa Birch, Kathi Madison, Larry Cook, Steve Sample, Gary Schopfer, Max Baldwin, Phyllis Albertsons, Herb McKenzie, Kelly Shapley, Latne McMakin, Mo Field, Nancy Sheets, Joe Wells, Audrey Wells, Brett Feemster, Steve Ummel, Linda Lyons, Beth Majeroni, Jim Lomax, Dan Huffer, Nancy Howell

Chris called the meeting to order at 6pm; Lisa Birch opened in prayer.

Members introduced themselves and stated which committee they were apart of -

Current Status of the UMC, Status of the South Georgia Conference, Key Issues, Affiliation Options, Legal Considerations and Financial Considerations.

(See attached handout from meeting for agenda, guidelines and responsibilities, dates, and committee breakdowns)

Chris went over the timeline from the past 30-45 days. Stressing the key plan is to foster an open environment, and communication. Chris and Lisa have held weekly "focus group" meetings held Wednesday afternoons at 5 pm, allowing the opportunity for all members of the church to be heard, and to ask questions.

Chris Frohn, Lisa Birch, Michelle Johnson, and the office staff (Meghan and Debbie) met week prior to establish a new email for membership to send questions and comments. This email will be directly sent to Chris, Lisa and Michelle to handle questions in a timely manner.

The church will be updating their website as well, with a special "tab", listed Affiliation Discernment, that members can go to that will be updated weekly as information is gathered. The website will be up and running on September 26.

Every week an email will go out to every member's email address

(from SIUMC PUBLISH) giving updated information.

Chris shared the September 11 TownHall meeting held right after church. There were approximately 180 in attendance and he went over the handout "Guiding Principles and Responsibilities" of the SIUMC Discernment Committee and answered member questions.

Chris reviewed the handout, his expectations of each committee's "Executive summary"

* A bound report, to be mailed and or handed out to every member

* Each committee must only use one page, broad bullet point guide

* More details are not apart of this report- committee's can post on church's website their "cited work"; YouTube videos; create presentations to present to the members either after church, Wednesday night dinners, Sunday school presentations, etc.

Questions asked:

~If the news media calls the church for comment: direct them to Chris. No church employee is to answer questions from possible news media.

~How have the focus groups "temperature" been? Good, each group has had good questions that Chris and Lisa have made notes and addressed. (this is where a new email has been birthed as well as the importance of weekly updates through emails)

~Who are considered "voting members"? Children who have been through confirmation (usually around 7th grade) to adults who have formally joined the church.

~Waiting for a March vote, are we worried about a new Bishop "changing the rules"? Probably not, the only change we will have from not voting in August is the financial difference which is primarily in the Pension Liability.

~ Why not vote earlier? We want to create and keep unity in the membership. Our feedback in late July and the reason we moved the vote, is that membership needed more time to be able to understand. "We are going to over communicate".

~ We need to coordinate and be sensitive of our presentations with Stewardship Sunday and the Finance Committee's pledge campaign.

Chris reviewed the timeline, listed on the handout. We will have the Executive Summary booklet ready to handout on November 1. We will have an after church (November 13) subcommittee panel discussion on the executive report.

Those members who were not available on the 13th, we will hold another panel discussion on November 16.

After Thanksgiving (November 28, December 5 and 12) we will schedule additional in person sessions. We will use January and February as a time to allow each committee to use either guest speakers or YouTube presentations or any other means they feel will help present their topic, and their research.

Lisa Birch closed with a prayer and Chris Frohn called meeting adjourned at 6pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Birch