



## ***UMCG is staying United Methodist***

Across the nation and around the globe, The United Methodist Church –one of the largest Christian Protestant denominations with twelve million members worldwide- is starting to look more un-tied than united. Hundreds of local churches are voting to leave the denomination over key cultural and doctrinal issues – primarily over LGBTQ rights and inclusion. Some of these disaffiliated congregations and clergy are aligning with a newly formed denomination that adheres to conservative values and traditional beliefs, the Global Methodist Church.

This isn't the first time Methodists have struggled with their union. Back in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century division was had over the key cultural and doctrinal issues around slavery and labor. Local churches left the denomination to form new denominations that aligned with these key issues – many of which reunited a few generations after their disaffiliation.

Over the years, the United Methodist Church of Geneva, (UMCG), has had its own dividing issues over building location, direction of the church and even LGBTQ inclusion. While not every member of UMCG agrees on every issue, we have recently committed to the shared values of:

- **Inclusion:** We boldly love and accept people for who they are.
- **Welcoming:** We invite our community into our home with open arms.
- **Generosity:** We share our prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness.
- **Compassion:** We listen and act to bring healing and wholeness.
- **Open-minded:** We value respectful dialogue.
- **Serving Others:** We transform our community through faithful acts of mercy and justice.

Nonetheless, during this split in the United Methodist Church, UMCG is committed to staying United Methodist and embracing the hard work of living in community. As our founder John Wesley said, "Though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike? May we not be of one heart, though we are not of one opinion? Without all doubt, we may. Herein all the children of God may unite, notwithstanding these smaller differences." We trust that we will come out a stronger, more inclusive and just denomination and local church.

By continuing to be United Methodist, UMCG joins thousands of United Methodists in our commitment to a Wesleyan theology of grace based in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and the continuing movement of the Holy Spirit.



As we recommit ourselves to United Methodism:

- We embrace the fundamentals of the Wesleyan tradition and dedicate ourselves to the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.
- We embrace a Church that interprets scripture with a theology of grace.
- We embrace a Church that aspires to be a more just and inclusive force in the world.
- We embrace the connected power of twelve million souls united, working towards good in the world.
- We embrace a Church that has uplifted our own lives and the lives of our friends, family, and those we cherish.
- We embrace a Church built on loving relationships rather than uniformity in thought and action.
- We embrace a Church where everyone does not have to agree and where everyone is welcome.

In the divisive times in which we live -both within the church and within our communities- we think the Church of Jesus Christ, as it is lived out as United Methodist, can bring healing and wholeness to our homes, our communities, and our world. We invite everyone to illuminate our community with God's grace as we lovingly accept, listen to, and serve all in the Spirit of Jesus – that's our mission as United Methodists of Geneva.