

## **A Call to Prayerful Discernment for Due West**

**“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” -- Jesus John 13:34-35**

First and foremost, we want to be known as disciples of Jesus. That means we show love for one another. As we enter into topics where emotions often run high, we want to make sure that everything is said with a spirit of love and respect.

Why do we need an information sheet?

For many years, the people of The United Methodist Church (UMC) have struggled to be “united”. Many have felt that the divisions were so deep, the church needed to split. In 2020, General Conference (The church’s top law-making body) was to vote on a plan that would give churches who felt called to leave The UMC the ability to do so with property intact. That was called “Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace Through Separation”. (Protocol) If you were not aware, it has always been the case that the property of United Methodist Churches does not belong to the local congregation, but to the annual conference. Because of the global pandemic, the General Conference was postponed to 2021, then 2022 and now 2024. With these postponements now official, many of you have asked about the impact on Due West. There are several options that churches can explore, and some congregations have already begun to explore them. This information sheet is provided so that you can begin to understand the options that are before Due West. The goal of this document is to provide clarity and ensure everyone understands the situation.

What’s next?

Our Administrative Board will begin a discernment process with input from the congregation, about where God is calling Due West for the future. We will hold listening sessions in the weeks ahead to hear from everyone. After this period of discernment, the Administrative Board will determine whether to call a church conference, where every full member is eligible to vote. This church conference would decide on our future for continuing in mission and ministry in West Cobb.

What would the choices be?

Due West can choose to remain with the UMC. There is certainly more than one other options, but the most prominent is the soon to be launched Global Methodist Church. Two pages follow making a case for each choice. This is not meant to be the final word, but the beginning of a much larger conversation. As you read the following documents, and as the church discerns a path forward, remember two things. First, Jesus tells us that we will be known as his disciples when we love one another. These are contentious topics and difficult discussions. As we have hard conversations, may we show the world what it means to speak with love and grace and demonstrate how to respect those with whom we disagree. Second, throughout this time, remember our mission is: "Inviting our community to join us as we gather together, grow in Jesus Christ, and go serve." In light of our mission, take time to prayerfully consider the question: "Where do I think God is leading Due West to best be able to fulfill our mission to our community?"