



BETHANY

Town Hall Meeting

October 24, 2021

Summary Review – How did we get here...

- The Strategic Planning Sub-Committee of the Bethany Finance Committee was formed in 2018 to study the optimization of Bethany's physical resources to align with the congregation's vision.
- A recommended path forward was finalized for preview to the congregation by March of 2020.
 - The plan had multiple paths based on our post-separation size with the anticipated split within the United Methodist Church.
- With the expected Annual Conference vote postponed as a result of the pandemic and emerging stories of aggressive tactics being employed by United Methodist Bishops to impact traditional (non-progressive) pastors, the Strategic Planning Committee turned its attention toward developing a cohesive plan to define a best path forward for Bethany Church.
- On July 18, 2021, a town hall was held to educate the congregation on the developments that have occurred within the United Methodist denomination and to recommend a path forward.
 - The shared materials from this meeting are available on the Bethany website
- Over the past 3 months the Strategic Planning Committee has taken extensive steps to elicit feedback from the members of Bethany regarding their preferences for a path forward. This included one-on-one interviews, phone calls, and a congregation-wide survey available electronically from B-mail, on paper via home mailings and paper copies in the narthex after services.
- **TODAY WE SHARE THE FEEDBACK RECEIVED & DEFINE THE NEXT STEPS OF THIS PROCESS**

Review – Our Three Primary Decisions

The UMC Denomination is Prepared to Split
(Where does Bethany align?)

(1) Theological:

Progressive

Traditional

(2) Procedural:

Path 1

- Accelerated
separation

Path 2

- Wait for
Protocol to pass

(3) Long-term Affiliation:

Global
Methodist

Independent

50% Majority Decides

Global
Methodist

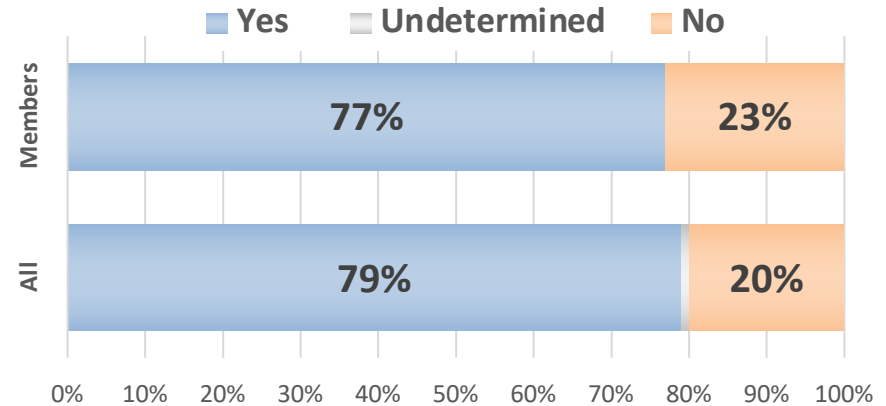
Independent

67% Majority Needed to Leave UMC

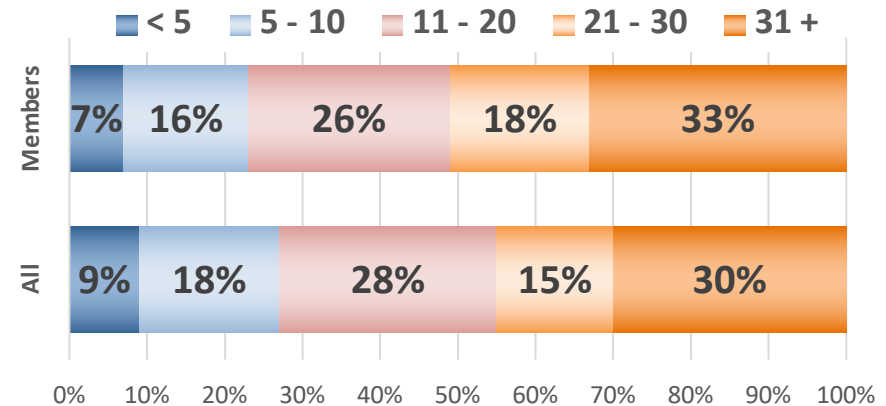
Both Traditional Paths Offer Multiple Options for Bethany's Long-term Affiliation

Survey Results

- Are you currently physically attending worship at Bethany Church?



- How many years have you been affiliated with the United Methodist Church?

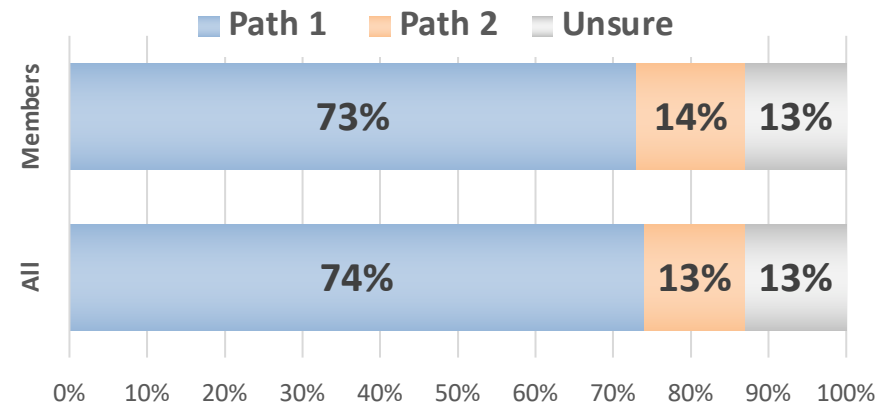
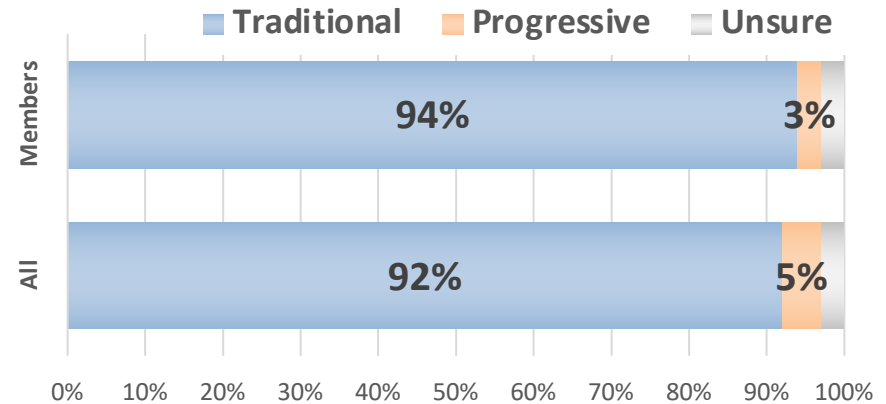


Received 284 individual responses, of which 216 were identified as members

Bethany's Voice Includes a Diverse Range of Experience and Worship Preferences

Survey Results

- When the United Methodist Church divides into two separate denominations, to which would you prefer Bethany Church align?
 - Traditional
 - Progressive
- Which path forward is your preference?
 - Path 1 – accelerated separation in 2022
 - Path 2 – separation under Protocol effective in 2023 or potentially 2025



Received 284 individual responses, of which 216 were identified as members

Bethany is a Traditional Congregation Seeking to Act Now

Next Steps in This Journey...

- Based on the feedback received, the Strategic Planning Committee, with the assistance of two law firms appropriately experienced in matters of church disaffiliation will begin execution of **Path 1**.
 - STEP 1** - Complete all necessary tasks to position Bethany Church for operation as an independent church including the establishment of by-laws and completion of all other legal, contractual and operational requirements.
 - STEP 2** – Once all foundational work is completed, notification will be given to the District Superintendent regarding the scheduling of a church vote to disaffiliate from the United Methodist Church. Once the notification is acknowledged, negotiations with the conference will commence.
 - STEP 3** – Church vote. By the time of the vote all terms and costs of the disaffiliation will be known. The members of Bethany Church will vote to complete the disaffiliation. Passage requires a two-thirds majority. If passed, Bethany begins operation as an independent church.



MOST IMPORTANTLY – If at any point in the process the Strategic Planning Committee believes, based on feedback and progress of negotiations, Path 1 is no longer the optimal path for Bethany, it will notify the congregation and abort the process.

Work to execute Path 1 starts immediately. However, optionality remains!

Summary

1. This journey is a process. We don't have all the answers today but believe a pro-active approach will best serve the Church.
2. The Strategic Planning Committee is working for the best outcome for Bethany, but it is not pre-disposed to any one outcome – if it does not make financial sense to stay on Path 1, we will abort.
3. We encourage your suggestions and regular input. The Committee will do its best to keep everyone up-to-date as additional information is made clear.
4. Ultimately our only goal is to do God's will for this congregation and provide a sustainable foundation for Bethany to contribute to the growth in God's Kingdom.
5. Pray! We desire unity and discernment in understanding God's plan for Bethany.
6. Future status updates and Q&As to be posted on the Bethany website.

Continue to Pray for God's direction, ask questions, stay informed and get involved!

Q&A: Key Aspects of Independent Status

1. Bethany will align with the **biblical model for the church** as told through the book of Acts. Early churches in Antioch and beyond were independent [house] churches that spread Christianity throughout the known world.
2. Bethany will have the opportunity to clearly define its vision and administrative approach with the drafting and implementation of its own **By-laws**.
3. Oversight of Pastors, ministries and overall administration will be the responsibility of a lay-member **Directional Team** with rolling appointments.
4. Bethany will have direct **control over the appointment of our Pastors**. Bethany is no longer subject to having its Pastors reappointed to another church. Nation-wide search firms are available to identify new Pastors as needed.
5. Pastors will receive stipend and church contributions to 403(b) retirement plan to replace future contributions to pension and retiree medical benefits.
6. Mission funding decisions will continue to be made
7. During a period of independent status, Bethany will not lose all sense of connectedness; there are other affiliations of independent churches to which Bethany can join – Bethany will not be alone

What other questions do you have?

Bethany's Strategic Direction Team

Team Members:

Dave Alderson (Lead Pastor)

Steve Skekel (Associate Pastor)

Denny Farkas (Committee Chairperson)

Mike Witmer (Finance Chairperson)

Jack Payne (Stewardship Chairperson)

Mike Bunner

Alicia Redfield

Send questions to:

Strat@bethanyumchurch.com

Please direct questions to the team members or to the church office

Thank You for Attending Today's Town Hall

Continue to Prayer for God's direction, ask questions, stay informed and get involved!

Appendix

Direct Comparison – Advantages and Considerations

	Path 1	Path 2
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactive; we control timing and process • Bethany will have more control of process early on • Will develop full understanding of the cost of independence early in the process, providing greater certainty • Allows Bethany to focus squarely on growing membership and God's Kingdom with clear vision and alignment of priorities • Apportionment expense freed up for ministry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reactive, will have to wait until new Global Methodist Church materializes and then decide whether to affiliate or go Independent. • Bethany will assume delayed control of the process in 1-3 years • Will develop full understanding of the cost to affiliate with the Global Methodist Church, as well as the cost of Independence, later in the process. There will be greater short-term uncertainty. • For those members who are committed to the Methodist denomination, this path allows for global continuity
Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will require significant investment of Leadership Team time over the next year • Undefined period of independent operation • Eliminates possibility of progressive leadership retribution against Bethany • After the next few years play out the relative cost of disaffiliation may prove higher than was necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The vote for formation of the Global Methodist Church could be delayed, enabling the progressive application of the Book of Discipline to continue • Delaying separation from the progressive denomination could limit our operational and foundational flexibility

Next phase of work will clearly define specifics – Ultimately it will come down to faith!