

**Minutes of the Jeremiah 29:11 Task Force of Christ United Methodist Church
July 6, 2022**

Present:

Bob Ayers, vice chair	Barbara Burnham	
Sunday Coffman	Ken Crouch	Sue Fredrickson
Sarah Jowell	Gail McClendon	Joey Moreland
Tom Young	Liz Williams	

Absent:

Bill Stoltz, chair

Ex officio members present:

Jim Rose, Lay Leader Jeff Thomas, Church Council chair

Absent:

Chappell Temple, senior pastor

Agenda item 1: Vice-chair Bob Ayers opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m., and member Tom Young offered the opening prayer.

Agenda item 2: The minutes from the June 20 meeting were submitted for approval. All were in favor with no alterations.

Agenda item 3: Vice-chair Bob Ayers began with the question: “Who will determine/decide if Christ Church Membership will be asked to vote on disaffiliation, and if yes, when?”

The decision of the Task Force was that, based on our original mandate and guidance from the “Period of Local Discernment” document issued by the Texas Annual Conference (see attachment), **the Church Council makes the decision if there is a vote.**

The second part of the question – if yes, when? – was discussed with no conclusion reached. Comments included:

- At the June 20 meeting (see June 20 minutes):
 - > “Pastor Temple clarified that these dates [referring to the date of the called Annual Conference and related deadlines] do not imply that a church cannot wait to after Texas Annual Conference 2023.”
 - > November 6 was the recommended date for a possible meeting in order to get on the calendar for the District Superintendent, but not necessarily to vote
- Opportunities for disaffiliation will be available in 2023: the regular Annual Conference, and likely there will be a called Annual Conference before the end of 2023 to meet the sunset deadline in Book of Discipline paragraph 2553
- An email sent on July 6 from Pastor Temple suggested consideration of September 25
- September is too soon given the amount of education we feel is needed
- It is possible that the Task Force will decide, after input from the membership, that no vote is recommended

Discussion moved to the last statement (possibly no vote) and included:

- The decision on whether or not there will be a vote is part of our discernment process as we receive input from the congregation
- People need time to have the information; after we start publishing we could call Church Council to decide if we want to have a vote. Then could continue to educate if there is a vote in favor of moving to disaffiliation vote.
- In the steps for the discernment process letter from the TAC, a straw poll at a town hall is suggested; those meetings are open to everyone and it is a more relaxed feeling
- A vote creates division. If 75-80 percent of the people don't want to do it then why stir up division?
- An ad hoc survey has problems; someone could fill out at every meeting they go to.
- There's going to be two camps; if one camp is not heard, that creates division as well.

Agenda item 4: Vice-chair Bob Ayers moved the discussion to ideas for our education process and prepare tentative timeline with key dates.

Member Sue Fredrickson presented a proposed layout for the dedicated website, explaining it was a launching point for discussion. Based on previous input the group likes simple and clean navigation. She had met with the communication staff prior, who thought it would be fairly easy to produce, and early August was possible.

The site would be accessed from the homepage of the Church with a click box, which then opens to an introductory page. Suggested tabs from that page are: General Information; Information United Methodist Church; Information Global Methodist Church; Jeremiah 29 Task Force Information.

A sub-committee of members Sue Fredrickson, Gail McClendon and Sarah Schwab-Jowell will report back to the Committee with suggested content and tab placement.

Barbara Burnham distributed two documents of a suggested timeline, with diversion starting at "Possible Phases of Discernment" with differences based on a possible Church Conference date. (see addendums)

Starting in mid September, the process would move to "40 Days of Prayer and Listening for God's Guidance.' The committee endorsed continued development of the timeline, with adjustments to dates as we make decisions.

Agenda item 5: Member Sue Fredrickson distributed a proposed email process (see addendum) that meets the goals outlined by the committee (see June 20 minutes). Key points are the creation of a new Gmail account; automatic forwarding to every member all emails that come in; an automatic response thanking the sender for the email and stating if it is a question someone would respond; and a decision who would respond to the emails on behalf of the committee.

The committee approved the process with a decision that for the time being one of the two chairs would answer questions. Simple responses, such as “the answer can be found on the website,” can be given without approval. However, unique responses should be routed to prevent bias being expressed.

A draft for the Sunday bulletin announcing the email box and with a prompt question was approved. (see addendum)

At the time of this meeting, it was not sure if the Aug 7, District-wide Information would make the bulletin due to space limitations.

There was discussion on the best way to communicate to the various groups in our congregation by age, interest, group:

- There’s an issue with getting people to read the email blast
- Social media, which is not private, but will reach multi-generational groups; content should message: check your email, website, etc.
- Snail-mail letters can be sent; there was concern about the cost; maybe such a letter could be limited to those without email addresses
- Community moment video announcements during the worship services
- Announcements and handouts for Sunday Schools and small groups
- Ask Jan Randolph the best way to get information to our older members

Member Tom Young proposed an email to the congregation introducing the committee, the email address and the Aug. 7 District Information meeting. He will draft a proposed email letter.

Member Joey Moreland noted we need to start aggregating information for future posting on the website; perhaps the basis of the planned Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). Member Barbara Burnham has started a document that she will share with the Task Force, and members can add on to that.

Agenda item 6: Vice-chair Bob Ayers moved to Other Business, of which there was none.

Agenda item 7: Vice-chair Bob Ayers set the next meeting for Thursday, July 14, 4:00 p.m.

Agenda item 8: Vice-chair Bob Ayers closed the meeting with prayer at 7:35.

Respectfully submitted,
Sue Fredrickson, recording secretary, Jeremiah 29:11 Task Force

Addendum to July 6, 2022 Minutes

Materials listed in minutes; hard copies available on request

Texas Annual Conference Discernment Task Force Letter

<https://www.txcumc.org/period-of-local-church-discernment>

Proposed Email Box Procedures for Jeremiah 29 Task Force

Proposed Announcements for Sunday Bulletin, Email Blast

Framework for Affiliation Discernment Process Timeline, J29 Task Force History

Possible Phases of Discernment