



FIRST CHURCH

MYRTLE BEACH

January 25, 2024

Dear First Church Family,

Most of you know that our congregation had a church-wide vote on January 21, 2024 concerning our affiliation with the United Methodist Church. You may remember that we had informational meetings for our congregation in February, September, October, and November of 2023 and another in January 2024. After much prayer, discussion, and discernment, our congregation voted 379-35 (92%) in favor of disaffiliating from the United Methodist Church.

With such an overwhelming majority vote, we sense a lot of unity and cohesion among our church family. We acknowledge that some of our beloved church family members did not get the outcome for which they voted, and we want them to know that they are still valued as brothers and sisters in Christ.

While discerning and voting were the biggest steps in this process, the disaffiliation will not become official until June 30, 2024. The delegates of the South Carolina United Methodist Annual Conference will need to approve our request by a simple majority vote when they meet in June (9th-12th). Our church will send 7 lay delegates and 3 clergy delegates who will represent our congregation.

Our Lay Advisory Committee and Trustees will continue working with our attorneys to complete the requirements of the Agreement to Separate at the appropriate times between now and June.

Once the disaffiliation becomes official, our new name will be First Methodist Church of Myrtle Beach. We will need to update our church signage, website, and social media accounts to reflect our new name. We will be able to continue using our Hymnals, Bibles, and other United Methodist resources that we own.

As of June 30, we will be an independent church. The Methodist in our name will reflect our rich heritage, theological emphases, and our heart for mission and ministry. At a later time, under the guidance of our Church Council, we can decide when and if we want to consider pursuing affiliation with another Methodist or Wesleyan denomination.

We want to emphasize that our intent is to continue operating the same as we have been. There will be no major changes in our worship services, Sunday School classes or our committee structure. Our mission will continue to be: Follow Jesus and Share Him with Others.

We need to continue striving to be a church that loves God first, who reveres God, and who welcomes and extends the love of Christ to all people.

Together, we are the Body of Christ,

Pastors Joel, Michelle, and Jim

