

ST. MATTHEWS BY THE SEA
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

March 2, 2023

Dear Church Family:

Greetings in this season of lent! The intent of this letter is to give you some important dates coming up in the life of our church. As I have mentioned before, we are about to enter into a season together where the members of our church will determine whether or not we will disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church. I want to share with you some important dates coming up and I encourage everyone involved with our church to attend these meetings. Even if you are not a member, you are still a part of this church family. Below, you will see that there are meetings scheduled with the District Superintendent as well as a book study that I will be leading. I am offering a morning and evening session of this book study in the hopes that one of these times will fit your schedule.

Meetings Times and Dates

**All meetings are at the church*

Sunday, March 19 at 12:00 p.m.

Viewing the “Stay or Go” Video by Bishop Easterling followed by Q&A.

You can view the video ahead of time here:

<https://www.pen-del.org/resources-for-united-methodists-discerning-our-future>

Thursday, March 23, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

Meeting with the Delaware District Superintendent (Rev. Joe Archie). He will go through a presentation and take any questions and answers you may have.

Four Week Book Study

The book is called *Living Faithfully: Human Sexuality and The United Methodist Church*. I will be asking everyone to get a copy of the book. The church will get them in bulk and then we will ask you to reimburse the church so you can have a copy to keep.

The book study dates are:

Wednesday, March 29, 2023 (10:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.)

Wednesday, April 5, 2023 (10:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.)

Wednesday, April 12, 2023 (10:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.)

Wednesday, April 19, 2023 (10:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.)

Thursday, April 26, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

Meeting with the Delaware District Superintendent. He will take time to hear our learnings from the four-week book study and also take any more questions and answers you may have.

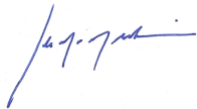
Saturday, May 20, 2023 at 1:30 p.m.

This will be our Church Conference to vote on whether or not to Disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church. As a reminder, anyone can attend but only members of our church can vote. It is also important to note that members of the church have to be there in person in order for their vote to count.

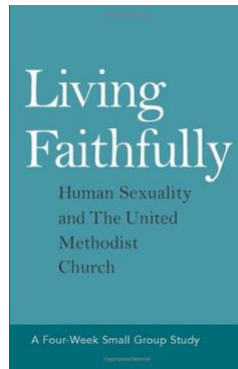
In addition to these meetings, we are also considering having two United Methodist pastors come in to the church for a dialogue. We are hoping to have one pastor be a part of a church who is disaffiliating, and another pastor who is going to remain United Methodist. If we can make this work logistically, we will share that date with you as well.

If you are a member of the church, you can also expect mail from the Delaware District confirming the dates where the District Superintendent will be with us. I look forward to hopefully seeing you at these gatherings; let us continue to journey through lent together and be in prayer for the future of our church. I am grateful for all of you.

Grace and peace,



Rev. Jake Macklin
St. Matthews By The Sea United Methodist Church
1000 Coastal Hwy
Fenwick Island, DE 19944
(302) 537-1402



More information on the book we will read together:

There is deep disagreement about what The United Methodist Church should teach about homosexuality, same gender marriage, and the ordination of LGBTQ persons. This book, *Living Faithfully*, is designed to help you understand the shape of this debate and what it means for the present and the future. Each chapter includes background on the Bible, Christian theology, history, stories from diverse viewpoints, and United Methodist structure and practice to guide reflection and conversation.

The four chapters are:

1. Is the Practice of Homosexuality Incompatible with Christian Teaching?
2. Is Same-gender Marriage Compatible with Christian Teaching?
3. Is Ordaining Practicing Homosexuals Compatible with Christian Teaching?
4. Where Are We Now?

This four-week study will help you understand and grapple with various views about the ministry and teaching of The United Methodist Church around issues of human sexuality. It will lead you to have honest, well-informed, and grace-filled conversations with others about these matters and the calls for change. And it will help you discern, in prayer and conversation, how you can respond faithfully in love of God and neighbor.