

Entering Into Discernment As the Body of Christ and As Individuals

God's Word commands us to seek and discern His will—both collectively as the Body of Christ and as individuals. When we face issues and decisions that may divide and potentially alienate members, we must commit and enter into faithful prayer, Scripture reading and study, and in servant-minded relationships with one another. Only together—in all humility—can we begin to discern God's will for FUMC.

In order to do that hard work, we offer the following statements to guide our discussions and discernment. These statements are grounded in the Vision, Mission, and Values of FUMC as we seek *“To honor and glorify God by obeying Jesus' command to make disciples of all people.”*

The United Methodist Church's continued uncertainty over issues of LGBTQ+ marriage and ordination is but one example of the issues facing our ever-polarizing and diverging world. We submit these statements to FUMC, resting in the fact that Jesus is Lord and His love transcends all our differences and makes us one in Him.

- To begin, we invite you to name those things that make FUMC “home” (e.g., people, relationships, pastors, food pantry, worship, music, children-youth-family ministries, congregational care) and give thanks.
- We want to be a church where all people who are seeking to know and follow Jesus Christ are welcomed.
- We believe ALL people are God's children, and we are ALL sinners in need of grace through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
- As sinners, we believe there is NO hierarchy of sin. As a result, we seek to be a church that shows compassion, mercy, and grace to ALL.
- We give thanks for the open communion table where ALL are welcomed.
- We believe Scripture is God-inspired and our primary source of authority.
- We acknowledge there are differing interpretations of Scripture just as there are differing political, social, and economic views.
- We recognize and are thankful for the diversity of members at FUMC and pray that it may increase.
- We seek to be a church willing to come into fellowship with others of differing opinions and engage in conversations that are open, honoring, and full of humility.
- We desire to be a church where we can ask hard questions and have the liberty and servility to disagree with one another without fear or judgment.

- We seek to be a church where all can GROW in the ability to engage in difficult conversations with grace and understanding.
- We acknowledge the hard work necessary to recognize the ways we are formed by our faith and by our culture, and how those influences work in complex ways to form our understanding regarding the issues that face us.
- We believe this difficult work can only be done in community with one another through prayer, meekness, and real relationships.
- Our ultimate goal is to demonstrate God's love, bring God glory, honor the authority of Scripture, and enable us ALL to serve as witnesses to the faith we have in Jesus in Fredericksburg and beyond.