

## **Timeline of Information**

**August 18, 2024-** Broad Street UMC held its first town hall. It included a video from Bishop L. Jonathan Holston, devotion and prayer from Rev. Ritter, information from the trustees of the church, question & comments, passing out a survey, and small group discussions.

**August 5, 2024-** The South Carolina Annual Conference Trustees issued a statement that this year will be the last year churches would be able to separate. The process is being "updated" and will be released in the coming weeks. More information is posted below.

**July 23, 2024-** At the Broad Street UMC's Church Council meeting, a motion was made and approved for Broad Street to enter a period of discernment. A vote of discernment does not mean a vote of separation but is a time of fact gathering and congregational meetings to seek input from church members and to keep them informed. This is also a time to determine the future of Broad Street. Pastor Ritter has informed the District Superintendent of this decision and waits his direction for the next steps. In the meantime, if you have any questions, you may contact Justin or me, Gary Smith. It is critical during this time that all Broad Street members stay in daily prayer about the future of Broad Street.

**June 17, 2024-** A congregational meeting was held with Rev. Dr. Stephen Love, Greenwood District Superintendent, over issues of the UMC and General Conference. The congregation submitted questions ahead of time and were able to ask questions in person. A recording of the meeting is available for you to come to the church and watch. Please let the office know.

**June 9-12, 2024-** The South Carolina Annual Conference was held in Greenville, SC. Three notable things happened:

- It was a heavy moment when the Conference approved 112 churches leaving the denomination. These churches voted to leave before the General Conference met in April.
- One notable decision was a decrease in the budget. This adjustment was made in response to the changing needs.
- A motion was passed recommending the Trustees stop allowing churches to leave. The Annual Conference cannot direct the Trustees in their policies, therefore, not binding. The Trustees will not meet until September to discuss upcoming changes to the 2025 process since it is reviewed and renewed yearly.

**May 21, 2024-** The Church Council met and questions about the General Conference were asked. Concerns were raised about the direction the UMC was heading. Pastor Ritter told the council members that he was planning an informational session at a later date to be announced. Council members wanted more information.

**April 23-May 3, 2024-** The UMC General Conference was held in Charlotte, NC. Below is the newsletter article by Pastor Ritter.

*Friends, I want to give you a statement to what happened at General Conference this week. After years of intensive and prayerful debate, the General Conference delegates from all over the world voted to remove language that prohibited United Methodist clergy from performing weddings for same-gender couples. This change allows churches and clergy to operate according to their conscience, without consequence.*

*The delegates of the General Conference also voted to remove prohibitions that prevented a Board of Ordained Ministry from*

*recommending a gay or lesbian person for ordination. Please be assured that the Bishop and Cabinet will continue to work with churches and clergy to ensure the best match possible when making appointments. The mission is to have a vital ministry, not a ministry defined by conflict.*

*I know that different people have different opinions on these matters and the diversity of perspectives needs to be respected, but I want to reassure you that our ministry remains unchanged. We will continue to be the church as we welcome and embrace all members of our community. We will continue to show compassion, ensuring that every person who walks through our doors feels valued, respected, and supported. We will continue to live out the Gospel as we minister and bring others to the love of Jesus Christ.*

*Let us remember that our strength lies in our unity. As we collaborate and work together, I feel sure that we can navigate the complexity and respect one another. Please know that my door is always open to anyone who wishes to discuss these matters further or seek guidance and support. Let us lean on one another and on God's grace as we journey forward together.*

**September 20, 2023-** The congregational specialist for the Greenwood District, Rev. Jim Arant, came to WEF to present information about the UMC. He discussed the issues of human sexuality, the proposals for General Conference, and briefly shared options for churches who want to separate.

**June 4-7, 2023-** The South Carolina Annual Conference met in Florence, SC. 113 churches separated from the UMC over issues regarding human sexuality. The budget for the SCUMC decreased in response to the churches leaving.

**May 31, 2023-** The Lay Servants of Broad Street UMC held a congregation presentation of the current issues going on in the UMC. They presented information on what the issues are, how we got here, what we need to know, and the next steps, which included the process for separation. A consensus was to wait to see what General Conference will do.

**May 16, 2023-** The Church Council asked the Lay Servants to gather facts about things happening in the UMC and present them to the congregation.

**April 19, 2023-** There will be a basic UMC 101 class for the church. The class will discuss the history, the structure and polity, and the theology of the UMC. The congregation is asked to submit questions.

**December 20, 2022-** The South Carolina Annual Conference Trustees sent a process for separation to local churches. More information is found below on the process.