

# Pastoral Partnership Initial Info:

## What is Happening and Why:

- **The Appointment Process:** United Methodist pastors are appointed to a church or churches on a yearly basis. The Rev. Gary Heaton & The Rev. Phil Woodson received the projected appointments of serving as a ministry team at both First UMC & Wesley Memorial UMC for the upcoming appointment year (July 2020 - June 2021).
- **Unique Circumstances:** Several unique circumstances led to Wesley Memorial and First Church receiving this appointment:
  - The Rev. Isaac Collins, the current pastor at Wesley Memorial, was called back to the Holston Conference, receiving a new appointment near Knoxville, TN.
  - Wesley Memorial's social justice ministry calls for sensitivity, experience, and progressive leadership with familiarity of the situation.
  - These are uncertain times: between the harm caused by the 2019 General Conference and the current pandemic, the way that congregations do ministry and care for their communities is in flux.
  - This appointment recognizes that finances are uncertain for all churches, during this time of social distancing.
- **Opportunity to be Connectional:** People on both church councils, as well as the pastors, all felt called by the Spirit to move forward with this experiment, knowing that it would require additional workloads for the pastors, as well as congregational support. This appointment matches pastoral gifts with congregational needs by being flexible and innovative in a changing world.

## Pandemic Conditions:

- Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the pastors are promoting flexibility. There are too many unknowns to make firm decisions about what ministry programs, worship services, or other church activities will look like 3 months from now. We, who are caught in this "storm," have been set adrift in lifeboats and while we look for the shoreline, rowing our boats closer to one another benefits both congregations.
- The pastors, acknowledging the uncertainty in our lives, have decided that there will be no in-person worship services until sometime after July 5, 2020. The trustees and administrative bodies of each congregation, along with consultation from the pastors, will determine the safest path forward for each church after July 6, 2020.

## Pastoral Responsibilities and Schedules:

- When in-person worship and gatherings resume, the pastors envision a rotating preaching schedule and pastoral support to ministry events and administrative meetings.
- Effective pastoral ministry will not be determined by percentages and/or counting hours. The Pastors are always accountable to the relevant SPRCs.

## Staffing and Lay Resources:

- The pastors envision a rotating schedule for leading staff meetings, coinciding with preaching schedules.
- Lay leaders for each ministry area will regularly update pastors on the needs and actions of their work.
- The pastors will work diligently to maintain the vitality of existing ministries (Sanctuary, PACEM, Soup Kitchen, Reconciling Ministries, etc.), as well as continue to call lay people into emerging ministries, as the Spirit leads.
- Staffing will not be consolidated, as pastors will be highly dependent on their leadership.

### **Vision for Two Congregations:**

- This experiment is an opportunity to acknowledge the connectivity of the body of Christ. The pastors encourage each congregation to think about the impact of Methodism in the Charlottesville/Albemarle community.
- The pastors will support the strengths of each congregation to the benefit of the full community and continue calling people into ministry. The pastors affirm that God has called both Wesley Memorial and First Church into distinct and unique ministries. The congregations are not in competition but have the opportunity to explore connectional ministries.
- The benefit to this experiment is that in a world that seems increasingly divided, we will model a body that works together. This ministry model is a witness of our shared faith and our relationship as siblings in Christ.

### **Logistics for Communication:**

- The Pastoral Partnership Task Force will serve as the primary conduit for administrative intra-church communication as it relates to the pastors.
- The pastors look for the laity to take the lead on developing and strengthening connections and communication between the churches for Worship, Nurture, Outreach, Witness, and Congregational/Pastoral Care.
- As the relationship between the two congregations evolves, the pastors envision the potential for shared communication methods.
- Church finances will not comingle. First UMC will receive a monthly payment from Wesley Memorial for pastoral compensation.