

Frequently Asked Questions

Is the congregational survey a vote? No. The purpose of the survey is to gather information about the opinions present in the congregation surrounding the issue of LGBTQ+ inclusion. We are using the survey to take the “pulse” of the congregation, so that the task force and Church Council can decide how to proceed in the most informed manner.

What are my options for taking the survey? You can take the survey online if you have an email address on file with the church office (only one response can be received for each email address), or you may take the survey in-person after worship on May 19th or June 2nd. If you are unable to participate in any of these ways, you can take the survey by mail, by requesting a mailed copy from the church office.

When will the survey close? The last day to complete the survey is June 2nd.

How are church members who have no computer, who aren't able to leave home, or who live with disabilities going to be able to participate? The two after-church in-person sessions are for people who do not have, or would prefer not to use their computers to take the survey. At the in-person session we will have paper copies of the survey available. For persons with disabilities, we will have assistants available to help them with the survey. We also want folks who aren't able to get to the church to have the opportunity to take the survey too. If they request it, we can mail them the survey. Persons interested in a mailed copy of the survey can request one from the church office.

How will church members that live out of town be able to participate? By the same process above. If people are out of town and want to participate, and do not have access to a computer, we can mail them a survey at their request.

How will church members who share computers or email addresses be able to participate? The survey will be sent to each email address on file with the church office. The same computer can be used to complete each survey, but only one survey can be completed per e-mail address. You may complete the survey by clicking a link that comes in your email inbox.

If you share an email address with members of your family there are a couple of options: one person can use each email address, and others can take the survey at one of the in-person sessions after

church. Or, we can mail a survey to one of the persons who shares an email address. Another option is to sign up for an additional email address, so that each member of the household has a separate email address. Then update the email address with the church office.

Uh oh. I didn't get the email. What do I do? Sometimes a spam filter will filter out the survey link email. If this happens to you, check your spam or junk e-mail folder and see if you can resurrect it. If it is still missing, you can fill out a paper survey, or contact Stuart Harrell (stuart.harrell@gmail.com) to request another link.

Is the survey really anonymous? How does that work? Yes. The survey software we use allows us to see who filled out the survey so that we can be sure it is getting to all appropriate groups. The software prevents us from seeing what individuals filled out: the information about your name and whether or not the survey is completed is separate from the survey content, much like when we vote in elections.

How has the survey been publicized? We have sent several messages about the survey in the church e-news, and have made announcements in the Sunday bulletin and before worship on Sundays.

Will the survey be used to decide whether or not we leave the denomination? No. The purpose of the survey is to gather information. It is important to know that the 2019 General Conference made it easier for congregations to leave the denomination. For that to happen, a congregation has to vote by a two-thirds majority (in-person at a charge conference) to leave, they have to settle any debts or concerns with the conference board of Trustees, and then the Annual Conference has to vote by a simple majority to allow them to leave.

Please know that this survey will NOT, in and of itself, be used to determine if Duke Memorial United Methodist Church will remain a part of or leave our our denomination. Our purpose is to determine what sorts of things we can do as a congregation to be more inclusive. While leaving the denomination could be a future possibility to this end, we are currently gathering information on all of the options available to Duke Memorial.

Who owns our building? Concerns about leaving the denomination are prompting this question. Please see also the previous question about whether the survey is about leaving the United Methodist Church. The building is held by the local church "in trust" to the denomination. While we own it, we can only use it for the purposes of the denomination. General Conference 2019 provided a way for United Methodist Churches to leave the denomination with their property. There's a good resource at this link, if you want to read more: http://www.gcfa.org/media/1307/trust_clause_brochure_feb_2014.pdf.

What is going on elsewhere in the denomination? How are other churches handling this? There are many active conversations across the denomination on all sides of this issue, and at this point there is

no one clear message about what the future holds on either side. There are as many responses as there are individual congregations, with some churches remaining silent, others engaging in clear actions of protest, and still others leaving the denomination. We remain in prayer for our denomination, and the task force is gathering information about what is occurring across the denomination so that we can better know our options for becoming more inclusive.