



MESSENGER

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF TITUSVILLE
206 S. HOPKINS AVE, TITUSVILLE, FL 32796

OCTOBER 2022

Grassroots groups talk up The United Methodist Church

By Sam Hodges
Sept. 19, 2022 | [UM News](#)

Key points:

- † In a time of church disaffiliations, some conferences have seen grassroots groups emerge to advocate for remaining in The United Methodist Church.
- † The groups go by such names as Stay UMC, Celebrate UMC, That We May Be One, Arkansans Staying United and Abide South Georgia.
- † Providing information and countering what they see as misinformation is a key goal for the groups.

The Rev. Cory Smith is a pastor in the Alabama-West Florida Conference, where more than a few traditionalist churches are poised to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church and others are weighing their options.

But Smith is a determined leader of [Celebrate UMC](#), a group of Alabama-West Florida clergy and laity who are waving the United Methodist flag.

“The purpose of Celebrate UMC is to support, encourage and resource those who wish to stay in the UMC,” said Smith, pastor of Auburn United Methodist Church, in Auburn, Alabama.

Celebrate UMC sponsored a June 13 event at United Methodist-affiliated Huntingdon College, in Montgomery, Alabama. Some 400 people nearly filled the chapel to hear the Rev. Tom Berlin, a veteran General Conference delegate and endorsed candidate

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for bishop from the Virginia Conference — and a strong advocate for The United Methodist Church.

Smith considers that night a turning point for himself and like-minded members of Alabama-West Florida.

“There was great energy in the room because an event focused around staying UMC had not ever been hosted in our conference,” he said. “It was the launch point for a new narrative in our conference. Since then, clergy who wish to stay UMC have felt more connected and empowered.”

Alabama-West Florida is one of a handful of U.S. conferences seeing considerable discussion and action around disaffiliation but also the emergence of grassroots coalitions advocating for remaining in The United Methodist Church.

They have, in effect, stepped up to counter the messaging of traditionalist, pro-disaffiliation groups such as Good News and the Wesleyan Covenant Association.

In the North Alabama Conference, there’s [Stay UMC](#), which has been going since 2020 and has a robust internet presence.

“Our entire website is intended to persuade people to consider remaining in the denomination,” said the Rev. Steve West, a leader of Stay UMC and pastor of First United Methodist Church in Jacksonville, Alabama.

In the South Georgia Conference, there’s a recently formed group called [Abide South Georgia](#), which has launched its own information website.

The South Georgians were inspired by Stay UMC.

“They really were the impetus,” said the Rev. Jon Brown, one of the Abide South Georgia organizers and associate pastor of Vineville United Methodist Church in Macon, Georgia. “We really liked what they did, but it seemed focused on their own conference. We said, ‘Well, what if we did our own?’”

The Arkansas Conference has Arkansans Staying United, which has a [Facebook page](#) with more than three thousand followers, and the Texas Conference is home to That We May Be One.

The latter group started in 2016 with the goal of promoting unity and understanding among conference members with different theological perspectives.

But these days, [That We May Be One](#) is trying to make sure accurate information and a pro-United Methodist perspective reach the meetings where hard decisions are being considered.

“What we’re mostly working on is trying to help

churches who are in the discernment process,” said the Rev. Lindsay Kirkpatrick, pastor of Asbury (United Methodist) Church in Pasadena, Texas.

Kirkpatrick believes [#BeUMC](#) and other broad-based efforts to make a case for the denomination are vital but can’t substitute for local groups.

“What we have that they don’t is relationships,” she said.

No one disputes that The United Methodist Church is in a fraught season.

Decades of internal conflict, especially over how accepting to be of homosexuality, led a diverse group of church leaders to [propose a formal denominational split in January 2020](#). The Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace Through Separation would allow traditionalist churches to depart with their properties and form a new denomination, getting \$25 million to start.

But the pandemic [has postponed until 2024](#) the General Conference at which any separation proposal could be approved. Meanwhile, a traditionalist breakaway denomination, the Global Methodist Church, [began operating](#) earlier this year.

Churches wanting to disaffiliate can take advantage of Book of Discipline [Paragraph 2553](#), which allows them to be released from the denomination’s [trust clause](#) and depart with their properties — if they meet certain procedural and financial obligations. That opportunity expires at the end of 2023.

Since 2019, annual conferences have approved about 680 disaffiliations, according to a United Methodist News review of [U.S. annual conference reports](#), publicly available conference journals and the special annual conference sessions held so far. That represents a small percentage of the more than 30,000 United Methodist churches in the U.S.

Still, the conferences where the grassroots, pro-United Methodist groups are active tend to be seeing significant disaffiliation action.

The South Georgia Conference approved 62 church disaffiliation resolutions at an Aug. 20 special session. Alabama-West Florida expects to deal with about 30 when it meets in special session Nov. 12. The large Texas Conference, which has its special session on Dec. 3, reports that 71 of its churches have voted to disaffiliate.

There are about a dozen more [annual special sessions](#) scheduled this year for consideration of disaffiliation resolutions.

As many local churches continue to weigh their future,

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August Budget Spending Summary

The Finance Committee appreciates your contributions and donations. With your support we will be able to continue sharing God's love with those around us.

Income

Total Income:	\$28,422
<u>Monthly Budgeted Goal:</u>	<u>\$39,459</u>
<i>Income Under Goal:</i>	<i>\$11,037</i>

Expenses

Church Programs:	\$249
Finance:	\$0
Church Administration:	\$1,468
Facility Maintenance:	\$7,660
Personnel:	\$22,635
<u>Conference Apportionments:</u>	<u>\$3,598</u>
<i>Total Expenses:</i>	<i>\$35,610</i>

Income under Expenses: \$7,188

The budget for 2022 is **\$473,502** which, divided evenly, makes each month's goal \$39,459 rather than being weighted differently throughout the year. Although we have begun trying to cut expenses where we reasonably can, we are still feeling the financial pinch from the COVID-19 pandemic. If you are able to still contribute during these lean times, please help us to maintain our regular operating costs as you find you are able. Only with the generosity of our congregation have we been able to weather the storms of the past and even the current storm we are in.

Thank you for your loving generosity in keeping this church operating!

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

3 Synchronia Jeanty	11 Kitty Baldwin	20 Jake Sumlin
4 Rayelynn Henderson	12 Georgia Smith	21 Susan Adair
6 Carole Pyles	13 Diana Barnhart	28 Kathy Ireland
10 Sally Bradford	16 Adrienne Herrell	29 Pamela Delnero
11 Jim Talbert	20 French Johnson	

OCTOBER ANNIVERSARIES

1 Scott & Jill Dike	20 Jeff & Angie Messer
6 Bob & Judy Titus	28 Kris & Naomi Cooke

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the grassroots groups seek to assure traditionalist churches that The United Methodist Church will continue to welcome and value them.

The groups also have been scrambling to share facts about the disaffiliation process and counter what they see as distorted representations of The United Methodist Church.

“We were aware that some churches were in the discernment process and were getting biased or incomplete information from either the pastor or lay leadership,” said West of Stay UMC. “We’ve taken it upon ourselves to offer some balance.”

The Stay UMC website offers original material, such as an [FAQ](#), as well as links to other sources, including from the North Alabama Conference. The group also has dispatched speakers when churches in discernment have requested a pro-United Methodist representative.

The website for That We May Be One provides [a wide range of resources](#), including a lengthy “[UMC Mythbusting](#)” document. The first section refutes the claim, made by some disaffiliation advocates, that The United Methodist Church is straying from core Christian beliefs.

Another section pushes back against the idea that churches considering disaffiliation need to act right away. That We May Be One stresses that 2553 is still operative for another 15 months, and the group says it’s exploring whether the Texas Conference could approve a resolution extending a financially gentle exit path beyond that date, to give churches all the time they need to make an important decision.

“In our opinion, there’s a huge sense of false urgency,” Kirkpatrick said.

Along with written information, That We May Be One’s

site has video clips featuring pastors from the conference, but also the Rev. Adam Hamilton, pastor of the 15,000-member United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kansas.

The group sponsored Hamilton in recent talks at Houston’s Chapelwood United Methodist Church and at First United Methodist Church in Lufkin, Texas.

After the Houston event, Hamilton posted this on Facebook: “Much larger crowd than we expected and a lot of enthusiasm for Christ and for the UMC.”

Have the grassroots groups’ work resulted in any churches steering away from disaffiliation?

The groups aren’t claiming that but believe they’re having an effect.

“There have definitely been some churches that have slowed their process,” West said.

Cory Smith and others in Celebrate UMC certainly feel they have helped shift the conversation in the Alabama-West Florida Conference. The group recently published an [open letter](#) that’s collecting endorsement signatures from clergy and laity and getting circulated on social media.

“We believe that no institution or denomination is perfect, including The United Methodist Church,” the letter reads, “but this Church has called us, nurtured us, and brought us into connection with God’s children of our conference and we will work to make it better each day.”

Hodges is a Dallas-based writer for United Methodist News. Heather Hahn contributed. Contact Hodges at 615-742-5470 or newsdesk@umcom.org. To read more United Methodist news, [subscribe to the free Daily or Weekly Digests](#).





LIGHT OF THE WORLD

BENEFIT
CONCERT

NOVEMBER 6TH
AT 3PM

FUNDRAISER FOR:
FUMC ELECTRIC
RENOVATIONS



Annual Church Conference

Monday, October 10, 2022
4:00pm

Our annual church conference will be held on Monday, October 10th at 4pm in our sanctuary. You are invited to attend. At Church Conference, we will be voting on aspects of our operation that take place at the local church level.



Mending Service

Patchwork Friends Quilting Circle is offering a new service to our church community; a mending service. If you have buttons to sew on, a seam to mend, a patch to put on, then we are the place to go. We meet on the first Wednesday of each month in the Quilters room in Fellowship Hall (just inside the double doors) from 9:30am to 11:30am. So if you have mending to do, come on down and we will help you.

For more information contact Glenda Waring at 321-269-7631, ext. 204.

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October 2022

First United Methodist Church






Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2 9:00am Sunday School 10:00am Worship	3	4 1:00pm Making Sense of the Bible 2:30pm Sit & Fit 6:30pm Soliloquy 8:00pm Broadstreet	5 9:00am Patchwork Friends 3:30pm Joyful Noise Rehearsal 4:30pm Chancel Choir 5:30pm Vivos Voco Rehearsal 6:00pm Yoga Moms 6:30pm Cross Point	6	7 11am Ladies Day Out 1-3pm Food Pantry	1 7:30am Garden Club 8:00am Comm. Breakfast 8 8:00am Comm. Breakfast
9 9:00am Sunday School 10:00am Worship	10 10:00am Sara Fernandez Bible Study	11 1:00pm Making Sense of the Bible 2:30pm Sit & Fit 6:30pm Soliloquy 8:00pm Broadstreet	12 1:00pm Staff Meeting 3:30pm Joyful Noise Rehearsal 4:30pm Chancel Choir 5:30pm Vivos Voco Rehearsal 6:00pm Yoga Moms	13 10:30am Retired Teachers Mtg	14 1-3pm Food Pantry	15 8:00am Comm. Breakfast
16 9:00am Sunday School 10:00am Worship	17	18 1:00pm Making Sense of the Bible 2:30pm Sit & Fit 6:30pm Soliloquy 8:00pm Broadstreet	19 10:00am ADK Meeting 1:30pm Staff Meeting 3:30pm Joyful Noise Rehearsal 4:30pm Chancel Choir 5:30pm Vivos Voco Rehearsal 6:00pm Yoga Moms 6:30pm Cross Point	20 9:30am PEO Mtg 10:00am Trustees Meeting 4:00pm Leadership Team Mtg	21 9:30am Ladies Day Out 1-3pm Food Pantry	22 8:00am Comm. Breakfast
23 9:00am Sunday School 10:00am Worship	24	25 2:30pm Sit & Fit 6:00pm Moonlight Quilters 6:30pm Soliloquy 8:00pm Broadstreet	26 3:30pm Joyful Noise Rehearsal 4:30pm Chancel Choir 5:30pm Vivos Voco Rehearsal 6:00pm Yoga Moms	27	28 1-3pm Food Pantry 6:00pm Saxophone Recital	29 8:00am Comm. Breakfast
30 9:00am Sunday School 10:00am Worship	31 Halloween					

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FUMC Staff

Reception Desk	Ext 201
Rev. Wayne Cook - Pastor	Ext 202
Mario Davis - Administrative Assistant	Ext 203
Glenda Waring - Membership Secretary	Ext. 204
Leah Patterson - Finance Secretary	Ext. 204
Lauren Peterson - Family Ministries	Ext. 205
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J.D. Daniel - Organist	
Steve Rossi - Sound Tech	
Josh Huss - Lights and Visuals	
Dr. Bob Titus - Pastor Emeritus	

First United Methodist Church

206 S. Hopkins Ave
Titusville, FL 32796

Sunday School: 9:00 a.m.

Worship Services: 10:00 a.m.

Church Office Hours: 8am – 4pm, Monday - Friday
Closed from 12:00 – 12:30 p.m.

Phone: (321) 269-7631

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Facebook:

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