

## Dear Saint John Members,

Last night, the Administrative Council met to discuss the future direction of our Saint John ministries. As always, our conversation began with devotion, prayer, and a recognition of the ways God is at work in our lives and our community. We are grateful for the opportunity to walk this journey together, and for the feedback we received during the recent Town Hall meetings.

In our discussions, we reflected on the input from the membership, and each Council member shared their thoughts on the options presented, as was done during the Town Hall. In this discussion, we had 2 council members out of 25 that supported Option 1 which is to do nothing and remain as a “Traditional” United Methodist church.

The vote among Council members was as follows: 17 voted in favor of Option 3 (exploring an exit from the UMC), 2 voted for Option 2 (Quiet Affiliation), and 2 abstained.

Recognizing that this is a time of transition and uncertainty, we wish to approach the future with humility, openness, and above all, a spirit of peace. We are committed to maintaining transparency throughout this process and to moving forward in a way that honors God and the faithful people of Saint John.

### Next Steps:

1. **Financial Responsibility:** We have made the decision to cease paying apportionments to the UMC, effective immediately. We have spent about \$271,000 more than we have collected this year which has reduced St John’s financial reserves. We believe this is necessary to steward the resources of our church in a way that aligns with our current financial realities. We desperately need our members to resume giving.
2. **Rebranding:** A committee has been formed to begin the process of rebranding Saint John, including removing references to the UMC. This is part of our desire to clarify and strengthen our identity as a biblically centered community of believers.
3. **Signage:** The Trustees, who have been working with Zoning Commission of Oldham County on a new sign, will now begin exploring an interim solution to remove any UMC references from our signage as we move forward.
4. **Legal and Biblical Considerations:** We are aware of two concerns among our members:
  - The potential legal expenses if we pursue a suit against the UMC.
  - The biblical principle of seeking peaceful resolutions and avoiding lawsuits among fellow Christians.

In response, we have decided to pursue a peaceful exit strategy that may include the following steps:

- A prayer vigil asking God to guide us and soften the hearts of UMC leadership.

- A face-to-face meeting with the Bishop to express our desire for a peaceful and timely exit.
  - Collaboration with other like-minded traditional churches who are also seeking to leave the UMC.
  - Exploring options to transfer to another conference with an active exit plan.
  - Engaging in public relations efforts to build support for our position, while respecting the dignity of all parties involved.
  - Timing for these efforts are underway and we estimate we will have answers in the first quarter of 2025.
5. **Church Vote and Church Conference:** If a peaceful exit is granted, we would then hold a Church Conference with our District Superintendent to discuss the terms and requirements. Following that, a church-wide vote will take place to determine whether to accept the terms of the exit.
6. **If No Peaceful Exit is Granted:** Should we be unable to reach a peaceful resolution, we will present the congregation with two options:
- Seek legal means to exit the UMC
    1. We will produce an estimate for these efforts and will share the budget with church membership.
  - Or, walk away from the building and grounds to begin a new ministry in a different location.

**Commitment to Transparency and Feedback:** Throughout this process, we will continue to prioritize transparency. We will hold quarterly Town Hall meetings and provide regular updates in our church newsletter and on our website to keep everyone informed and engaged.

**A Spirit of Love and Unity:** Our approach is grounded in the belief that Saint John is a biblically centered, traditional church. We want our community to know that we are acting in the spirit of **agape love**, seeking a peaceful and respectful way forward. Legal action, if necessary, will be considered only as a last resort and a vote from our members

**Moving Forward Together:** As we continue to navigate these challenges, we must remain focused on the greater mission of making disciples and serving our community. Here are a few ways we can move forward together in faith:

1. **Pray** for the ministries of Saint John and for wisdom as we navigate this process.
2. **Give** faithfully, so that we can continue to pay our staff and serve the community, as we will no longer be sending apportionments to the UMC.
3. **Create** a welcoming environment at Saint John where all who enter feel the love of Christ.
4. **Let go of gossip and divisiveness.** We are called to unity in Christ, and together, we can move forward with peace and purpose.

In all that we do, let us seek the direction of Christ, trusting in His guidance and the strength He provides. Thank you for your continued prayer, support, and commitment to the work God is doing here at Saint John. We are excited to continue this journey together. In Christ's love,

St John Administrative Council



# Saint John Community Path Forward

In response to the recent Town Hall and prayer, the Admin Council has decided to pursue a peaceful exit strategy. Recognizing that this is a time of uncertainty, we wish to approach the future with humility, openness, and a spirit of peace. We are committed to maintaining transparency through the upcoming process.

- St. John Administrative Council

## Next Steps

### Short-Term Actions

**Financial Responsibility:**  
Cease paying apportionments due to the current financial realities

**Rebranding & Signage:**  
Begin removing UMC references and exploring rebranding via the trustees and a committee

**Collaboration:**  
Seek like-minded traditional churches that have or are seeking to leave to build a coalition

### Mid-Term Exploration

**Prayer:**  
Host a prayer vigil asking God to guide us and the UMC leadership

**Meet with the Bishop:**  
Meet face-to-face to express a desire to find a peaceful option for exiting

**Conference Transfer:**  
Explore transferring to a conference with an active exit plan

**Legal Research:**  
Gather information with other churches regarding legal actions

### Long-Term Decisions

**Peaceful Exit Option Available:**  
A church-wide Charge Conference will be held with the District Superintendent and the congregation to discuss the terms of exiting and vote

**No Peaceful Exit Option Available:**  
A church-wide discussion and vote will be held to seek legal means of exiting the UMC or walking away from the building to begin a new ministry elsewhere