



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
W I N T E R P A R K

Dear Church Family,

First United Methodist Church of Winter Park has been a witness to Christ in our community and the world for 135 years. We have seen changes in worshipping styles, the role of women in the church, participation of people of color and the role of youth in Christian service. These changes have been for the better and we all benefit from them. These changes have strengthened our church family's commitment that everyone is a valued child of God.

We are the Leadership Council – members with a passion for our church, its mission and its vision. We are elected to represent the congregation in matters of finance, human resources, property/facilities and ministry leadership. We work together to make decisions based on the mission and vision of our church. The road is not always easy, but we all have a deep sense of duty and a true love for our church and its members.

It appears that the United Methodist Church's almost 50-year conflict over the inclusion of LGBTQIA people may be coming to an end at the upcoming worldwide General Conference in May. Leaders across the traditionalist, centrist, and progressive perspectives on inclusivity have agreed in principle to a protocol for legislation to address the conflict. While we don't know the outcome, it's expected that the UMC in the US will allow ordination and marriage for LGBTQIA people. There is also expected to be provision for traditionalist congregations and annual conferences to gracefully leave the UMC and form a new Traditionalist Methodist denomination.

We seek full inclusivity for all ages, nations, races, abilities, classes, cultures, gender identities and sexual orientations. Regardless of your stance on this issue, we value you as a child of God and a member of this family. If you have thoughts on this or any other issue, we welcome you to be in conversation with those of us on the Leadership Council.

Our Bishop, Ken Carter, in his book *Embracing the Wideness*, states "We cannot be spirit-filled without loving our neighbor . . . and seeking unity as the body of Christ is deeper than any decision passed down by the General Conference." We look forward to continuing our history of being a welcoming church and broadening outreach across our community. We will embrace our likeness as Christians, living out the life God has called us to live, seeking justice and offering grace.

Blessings,
The Leadership Council, 2020

Melissa Payne, Chairperson
Ben Howell, Vice Chair
Ivor & Mary Scott Singer, Annual Conference Delegates
Bob & Nancy Constant, Annual Conference Delegates
Nancy Hanniford, Chair of Staff Parish Relations
Bill Legg, Co-chair of Trustees

David Johnston, Co-chair of Trustees
Laura Blackmore, Co-chair of Finance
Rusty Payne, Co-chair of Finance
Lynn Striepe, Vibrant Family Pillar Leader
Arnetta Rodgers, Gracious Hosts Pillar Leader
Bob Atchison, Passionate Seekers Pillar Leader
Lloyd Jaeger, Christ-Like Servants Pillar Leader

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*A vibrant family built on God's grace, who share a passion for the Word of God,
living and serving in the image of Jesus the Christ.*