

Path Forward Presentation Q&A (9/22/2023)

Below are answers and comments for the questions/comments that were compiled during the Path Forward presentations and presented as part of the Path Forward Committee's report to Church Council. These answers and comments were prepared by the Bethany Discernment Steering Committee and are based on facts and information that are currently available. The term "disaffiliate" is used throughout this Q&A document, but it should be pointed out that technically, the correct term would be "separate". However, since "disaffiliate" has been the term most often used during previous presentations / discussions and is the term most Bethany members are familiar with, it is used in this document.

- 1) What happens to the Bethany Staff if we vote to disaffiliate?

The Bethany office staff is hired and employed by Bethany (includes Pastor Barnes). A vote to disaffiliate does not directly impact their employment status. The only staff member whose employment status would be directly impacted by a disaffiliation vote would be Pastor Ritter. As a pastor (elder) in the UMC, he is temporarily assigned to a church by the UMC. If Bethany were to disaffiliate, Pastor Ritter would have to decide whether to remain with the UMC (leave Bethany) or remain with Bethany (leave the UMC). However, if Bethany disaffiliates, it would be up to Bethany as to whether to retain Pastor Ritter if he wanted to leave the UMC and remain with Bethany.

- 2) Who would likely stay, and who would likely leave?

The answer to this question is unknown. The decision to stay at Bethany or to leave Bethany if a disaffiliation vote passes or fails would be a personal decision for each Bethany member.

- 3) What would our budget look like if we disaffiliate and, 1/3 of our members leave?

If 1/3 of the membership leaves, the budget would almost certainly have to be reduced. How much that reduction would be is unknown as it would depend on how much that 1/3 of the congregation tithes to Bethany.

- 4) A 50/50 vote would be disastrous from a revenue standpoint as many dissenters would leave.

Bethany's financial resources would almost certainly be impacted. The size of the impact is unknown and would depend on how many members leave and how much those members tithe to Bethany.

- 5) The GMC seems to be the denomination of choice for many churches that have disaffiliated. Perhaps the committee can explain without bias the differences compared to the UMC.

