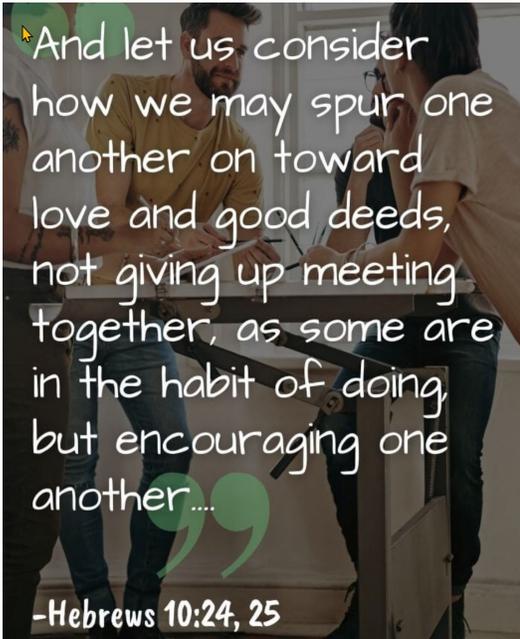




## ROAD TO HOLY DISCERNMENT

Doing God's will....finding common ground.

November 2023  
Issue 4



The God we serve is a God of unity who desires that His church live in *unity and harmony* built on the foundation that is Jesus Christ. It is Jesus who draws us together and the power of the Holy Spirit that makes our bond stronger. Since the beginning of Holy Discernment at Bethany, a call for unity among the congregation has been stressed. While many of the members of Bethany have sought and prayed for unity during this period of discernment, others have questioned the purpose of being united in thought and purpose.

Bethany is a church made up of many *different people with differing values and opinions*. Some members value doctrine, some social responsibility, and some discipleship among a host of many other values. **These values and opinions are important, but God declares that in His Kingdom, nothing is as important as being *united in love*.**

God calls Bethany to be a *vibrant and powerful* church that bears much fruit and the way we do that is *by working together in perfect unity, not perfect doctrine, not perfect leadership, or even in perfect agreement with one another*. Like many churches today, Bethany is experiencing a great deal of divisiveness regarding its future all in the name of truth, but is the truth something that is to bring division within our body of believers? **The truth, when focused on the person of Jesus Christ, will bring unity and not division.**

The enemy Bethany is fighting *is not intimidated* by a church that is fighting and being divisive with one another. Only when we are brought closer together by the love of God and one another are we in perfect unity with God and a threat to the enemy. **God values unity and values relationships with each other within Bethany.**

So how do we begin the process of being in unity with one another? The following is a step-by-step process based on scripture.

**Repentance**

**Humility**

**Vulnerability**

**Trust**

**Communication**

**Relationships**

Each one of these steps will be highlighted in future newsletters. It is our hope that you will read prayerfully and understand that Christian Unity does not mean we all have to have the same opinions on everything. It means that we share a faith that will allow us to deal with our differences in Christian love and understanding as we pray for God's blessings and for his will to be done. The **first step** is:

# Repentance

**Matthew 3:8 "Bear fruit in keeping with repentance."**

*If we are truly repentant, we should **show it** through our actions and behavior. Our good works must demonstrate the sincerity of our repentance. Our divisiveness is a sin and not in accordance with the unity God calls us to be therefore **let us repent.***

**2nd Peter 3:9**

*The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise at some count slowness but is patient toward you, not willing that any should perish but that **all should reach repentance.***

**2nd Chronicles 7:14**

*If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and **I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.***

## BETHANY UNITY PRAYER

Gracious Heavenly Father,

We come to You, acknowledging that Bethany is Your church. You have brought together people who love You and Your church with a desire to serve together in Your Kingdom. Give us a spirit of humility, gentleness, and patience. Help us be united in thought and purpose. WE seek the Holy Spirit to enable us to see our sin and suffering caused by our division. Unite us in seeking Your perfect will for Bethany.

In Your Holy Name we pray.  
Amen



## Life Together: Videos explore what UMC means to people

Oct 22, 2023



What does The United Methodist Church mean to you personally? The South Carolina Conference of the UMC, is putting together brief videos sharing reflections from United Methodists on the church and how it impacts their lives and ministry. Titled "Life Together," the initiative comes at a time when many are feeling disheartened by the ongoing conflict in the denomination. None of the reflections are political statements but rather personal contemplations of why people appreciate the UMC, both in their youth and today.

Read More: <https://advocatesc.org/articles/life-together-videos>

## Navigating the waiting space

August 28, 2023

After the turmoil and hurt feelings surrounding separation and disaffiliation, as well as the angst over what is General Conference going to do (or not do), many of us are stuck in an uncomfortable and unsettled place of uncertainty. Jessica Brodie recommends that we listen to God...

Read More: [SC Advocate | Navigating the waiting space \(advocatesc.org\)](https://advocatesc.org/articles/navigating-the-waiting-space)



in



Support Bethany UMC by supporting something Bethany is known for.....

## THE LIVING CHRISTMAS STORY (Nov. 30, Dec 1,2)

Get involved in doing God's work right here in Summerville! **SIGN UP!**



[http://www.bethany-umc.com/?page\\_id=11310](http://www.bethany-umc.com/?page_id=11310) is the Discernment Committee Website. All documents, committees, and shared resources can be located there.

# ROAD TO HOLY DISCERNMENT

If you have a question or concern you would like to have addressed, please email [discernment@bethany-umc.com](mailto:discernment@bethany-umc.com). *We want to hear from you!*

## Conversation Sundays with the Discernment Committee

**4:00 in room 127 every Sunday in November**  
**Open conversation**  
**A time to listen and be heard respectfully!**

*We keep hearing that the congregation wants to be heard. Come to these meetings and make that possible.*

**Notes from the 11-5-23 meeting will be in the next newsletter.....don't miss them on THURSDAY!**

## Our **WHY?** .....

With each publication of our newsletter, the Discernment Committee will be transparent about our WHY to insure we are working with God's Purpose for Bethany as our focus.

Luke 15:7

*Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. "*

This newsletter is the result of information gathered by various committees working through areas of the discernment process. Its purpose is to ensure that Bethany members have up to date information on the discernment process as well as the many topics affecting the current schism within the United Methodist Church.

If you have questions about the information provided or if you have questions/comments about any other topic related to our discernment process, please send an email to: [discernment@bethany-umc.com](mailto:discernment@bethany-umc.com).

