



BELIN MEMORIAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

December 15, 2023

Dear Belin Memorial UMC Church Family:

The Denominational Education Team (Dee Braswell, Woody DuRant, Jane Eason, Charlie Leonard, Ross Marple, Wilson Springs, Sidney Williams, and me) and Church Council invite you to 1.) keep the save the dates card somewhere that will remind you the upcoming education process so that you can plan to attend (in-person or online) and 2.) join us in honoring the deep and hope-filled meaning of the Advent and Christmas seasons by giving your primary attention to what we celebrate this time of year. We need the hope, peace, joy, and love of the seasons.

Let us carry the hope, peace, joy, and love of Christ into the New Year as we begin the education process with a unity worship service. The service will focus on our faith in Christ that unites us, even when we have different understandings and opinions.

The following Sundays we will seek to bring clarity through education sessions. To help us prepare, we invite you to submit written questions to the education team. Your questions will help us learn what are the most common questions among our congregation. You may submit questions online by using the form found on our website at belinumc.org/denominationalnews. You may also submit via the enclosed card or the cards that will be available during our worship services on January 7, 2024.

You will see on the enclosed schedule that we will also bring in guest presenters. One will share why he or she chose to leave the United Methodist Church and one will share why he or she chose to stay in the United Methodist Church. Both are coming from out of town so those two Sundays our gatherings will begin at 4 (rather than the 3 o'clock start of the other weeks).

Each of these gatherings will be available on livestream and posted to YouTube for those who cannot attend in person or want to go back and review them later. These videos will join other helpful resources already found on our website (click on the "Denominational News" tab on our homepage: belinumc.org).

We will also ask for people to commit to praying for the congregation through this process. Each day, beginning January 8, we will provide a brief prayer for our congregation to share in as part of our unity in Christ. And, we will provide times when the Sanctuary will be open for prayer. (Of course, the Seawall Cross, St. John's Chapel, and multiple garden spaces on campus that are always available and especially suited for prayer.)

Thank you for planning to be part of the upcoming education process and for being part of the Advent and Christmas events and services in the days ahead.

To a holy and joyful Advent and Christmas,

Will

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ESTABLISHED IN 1925