

A Plan of Action for the Churches of Syracuse

(adopted by consensus by the Citywide Leadership Team on Jan. 13, 2015)

SUMMARY

One year ago, the United Methodist churches of Syracuse were notified by the District Superintendent that, in order to address a general state of decline (worship attendance, new members, active leaders, finances, etc.), we would no longer operate as separate congregations, but would work together toward some kind of new cooperative structure, mission and identity.

The churches were given two years to come up with a plan to make this happen.

One year has now gone by with minimal substantive progress to point to. At the same time, many of our churches have grown weaker, and leaders have grown tired and discouraged.

The churches' initial unhappiness over the new arrangement has been compounded by growing frustration over the lack of a clear plan for the future. Remaining in limbo is no longer healthy or tolerable for our churches, members and leaders.

With that in mind, the citywide Leadership Team adopted a plan of action on January 13. The plan of action recognizes that churches are in different places in the congregational life-cycle, in their hopes for the future and in their ability to deal with change.

Because of that, churches will be given a choice of four different paths for moving into the future.

Path 1 is for congregations that are ready to move quickly and decisively into a revitalization process.

Path 2 is for congregations that want to take a more deliberate pace in the revitalization process.

Path 3 is for congregations moving toward closure, but wanting to remain together as long as possible.

Path 4 is for individuals and/or congregations wanting to start something brand new, completely free from the legacy of the past and from the responsibility of supporting a building.

In each group, churches will work cooperatively with the other churches who choose that same path.

The ultimate goal for all four paths is the same: to build a strong, vibrant, multi-cultural, fruitful and sustainable United Methodist ministry across the city of Syracuse for years to come.

All four options are good and honorable ones.

Churches will decide for themselves which path is right for them.

Churches need to make this choice before the end of February 2015.

Assistance will be provided to help churches make their choice.