

February 2023 Message from the Lay Leader

Dear Lillian UMC family,

"No creed but Christ!" This was the slogan of much of the evangelical church in Great Britain in the late 1880s. This was bumper sticker theology that often takes hold in the leadership of major denominations. Though often repeated, their slogan was seldom practiced. Such was the leadership of the Baptist Union, the denomination of Charles H. Spurgeon, arguably the greatest British preacher since Wesley and Whitefield.

The sloganeering leaders in the Baptist Union were called out by Spurgeon for their theological shift away from scriptural authority toward more culturally acceptable doctrines. All the while, they professed to still believe the Bible. A foreshadowing of today's church controversies. He called their slide away from the truth of scripture toward modern traditions of men, "the downgrade." After his calls for repentance and reform were ignored, Spurgeon did the unthinkable and left the Baptist Union, even as its most prominent member. He had concluded that "decision is the virtue of the hour."

Once again, history has repeated itself and the time has come to make a decision. The inaction of our annual conference in failing to "earnestly contend for the faith," has contributed to the continued defiance of our common rules of conduct and an accelerated devaluation of holy scripture. "A little leaven leavens the whole lump." The recent actions of the Southeastern Jurisdiction have a direct bearing on our annual conference. Actions have consequences.

On Sunday, February 5, 2023, the Lillian UMC Church Council voted unanimously to request the District Superintendent (DS) schedule a Church Conference to vote on disaffiliation from the United Methodist Church.

In response, on Sunday, March 12, 2023, the DS will convene a Lillian UMC Church Conference at 5:30 pm. This will be the official church vote as to disaffiliate or not. Only members of the Lillian UMC will be allowed to vote. All votes must be cast in person. As church lay leader, I urge all members to continue in earnest prayer and vote according to your conscience and the written Word of God.

Prayerfully submitted,
Perry Cunningham
Lay Leader