

When I was a young mother of three small children, we didn't eat out very often. But when we did one of our favorite places was to go get breakfast at the Kettle just down the road at the intersection of 290 and Highway 6. When they started working on that intersection it was a bit harder to get to the restaurant through the construction. One day I noticed the Kettle sign was gone and work was happening on the building. Soon a new restaurant was established. It stood in the same place as the Kettle but had a new name and the intention of the service had changed, they were now a BBQ place. The service was still of the same high standards and hospitality. The food was still delicious and top quality. But best of all the owners were still the same loving family that had owned and operated the Kettle. They had changed the franchise with which they had affiliated and made a few other changes including a name change, but it was still the family oriented and community supportive business it had always been.

Through the years, we too have gone through some name changes. Last Sunday following worship we met as a church family of voting members and addressed a very important question about who we wanted to be moving forward. We decided we wanted to stay true to the form of Methodism that was most closely aligned with John Wesley, who was the catalyst of the movement. In fact, he was labeled a Methodist long before there was an official Methodist Denomination.

Our own church is a legacy of all those Wesleyan Methodists who have gone before us following in John Wesley's footsteps. Our beautiful church has three stones showing some of the name changes and denominational affiliations and building construction we have gone through. The First one reads Methodist Episcopal Church South erected in A.D. 1901. The second reads: Franklin Methodist Church Percy Newton, Pastor 1954. The third one reads: Franklin United Methodist Church Erected 2017.

Sunday, we voted as a church with 100% agreement of the voting members present to disaffiliate with the United Methodist Church and to affiliate with The Global Methodist Church. To date, there are an additional 150 churches in our conference who are going through the disaffiliation process. This was not a difficult decision, but it was a prayerful one because it has lasting effects on our family of faith. We seek to honor God in our decision. We want to be true to Scripture as our authoritative source of God's word. We want to be true to Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, our means of grace and salvation. We want to be true to our commitment to serve and love others in the name of Jesus. We want to learn and grow together with others who understand that all are sinners at the foot of the cross in need of the saving grace God gave in the sending of His only begotten Son, and to recognize that while Jesus did not come to condemn, he did come to convict us of our sin and our need for his atoning work on the cross. Our decision will bring about a name change and a change in the denomination through which we carry on the work of the church. It will not change the family oriented, welcoming, and authentic way in which we worship, fellowship, and serve with one another and our community.

The process will not be complete until it is confirmed at the Special Called Annual Conference on December 3rd. We have selected December 31, 2022 to be our exit date, and we will officially join the Global Methodist Church on January 1, 2023.

We are excited about this new beginning, while continuing to honor the history of the church and those Wesleyan Methodists who have gone before us.