



Trinity United Methodist Church Adoption Questions and Answers

“Behold, I will do a new thing: now it shall spring forth.” -Isaiah 43:19

Q: Why should Buncombe Street UMC adopt Trinity UMC?

BSUMC has been given a unique opportunity to live out yet another manifestation of our church’s mission statement, “To Be and To Make Disciples of Christ,” in the adoption of TUMC. The members of TUMC have requested our help in the continuance of their church, and our serious, prayerful consideration of this request is appropriate. For the adoption to be successful, the vast majority of the BSUMC membership must indicate agreement with this proposal, and be open to changes that would occur as a result of this adoption. Unity breeds power and momentum: *“Above all put on love which binds them together in perfect unity.”* –Colossians 3:14

In order to determine if this is the right decision for our church, each member is encouraged to prayerfully consider this question: “Is the adoption of TUMC the direction that God is leading our church?” We hope that the following information, along with your prayers, will help you to discern the answer.

Please note the following:

- TUMC’s members are actively involved, both financially and in service, to their church, and they are passionate about its continuance.
- With the exception of a \$16,000 line of credit at the TUMC CDC, TUMC is debt-free. Current assets of the church total above \$5.3 million.
- The physical structure is sound (as determined by a Viability Study recently conducted), and while dated, has been routinely well-maintained.
- TUMC has continued strong mission programs in their community, similar to BSUMC’s commitment to missions.
- The TUMC CDC has continued to be strong and financially stable, with nearly 80 children enrolled.

Q: What is the chronology of events that has led up to this possible adoption?

- Worship attendance at TUMC has dwindled over the years to a current number of approximately 60 members.
- Rev. Carol Allison retired from the SC Annual Conference in June 2016 and remained appointed to TUMC as a Retired Supply Pastor in order to guide TUMC through a Viability Study of its sustainability.
- TUMC conducted a thorough Viability Study of their church, including assessing the history, attendance, finances, facilities, demographics, and energy/stamina of the membership to be in ministry going forward.

- In January 2017, TUMC members voted on four options: (1) stay as we are; (2) adoption by a larger and stronger UMC; (3) go on a charge (sharing a pastor from another church; or (4) close. After discussion, the paper ballot vote was as follows: adoption – 43; stay as we are – 15; go on a charge – 1; close – 0.
- Dr. George Howle, Greenville District Superintendent, asked BSUMC to consider adopting TUMC; if successful, it would become Buncombe Street United Methodist Church, Trinity Campus.
- A Due Diligence Team was appointed to research the possible adoption, gathering and analyzing information, and then making the information available to BSUMC.
- A Charge Conference was held on Sunday, February 26, to approve the addition of a new ministerial position to the BSUMC staff for the purpose of giving leadership to the Trinity Campus, effective June 28, 2017. The voice vote was unanimous.
- Two informational meetings will be held in the BSUMC Sanctuary for church members: Sunday, March 26, at 12:00 noon, and Wednesday, March 29, at 6:30 PM. All members are encouraged to attend at least one meeting.
- A Church Conference will be held at 12:00 noon on Sunday, April 2, in Sisk Hall. All BSUMC members will be given the opportunity to vote on the adoption by written ballot.

Q: If BSUMC adopts TUMC, who owns TUMC’s property and assets?

TUMC would become BSUMC, Trinity Campus. Therefore, all assets, including their building and land, would become part of BSUMC. BSUMC would then be free to use the property however the leadership decides. All UMC property is held in trust by the SC Annual Conference; if any church closes its doors, all property and assets revert to the SC Annual Conference at that time. Note that with this adoption, TUMC would be dissolved by the SC Annual Conference, and the property would be deeded to BSUMC.

Q: Will this adoption impact the momentum that our church has been experiencing over this past year?

Without a doubt the momentum will be impacted. The real question is, “Will the impact to momentum be positive or negative?” The answer to that will completely hinge on our willingness to follow the direction that God is calling us. If we move forward with the adoption and insist that we can only do what we were already doing, then a negative impact is likely. However, if we adopt and follow His lead, then He will do great things. The potential is great for new and exciting programs to develop as a result of this adoption. Finding space in our BSUMC facility has always been a problem, and the room availability at TUMC is a plus. Much of the success of this change depends on the transition team, the leadership of both TUMC and BSUMC, and the willingness of our members to work toward its successful fruition. As Rev. Allison wrote in the *Trinity Tidings*, the TUMC newsletter, “Change comes from desire and design, but also from a dynamic – a source of power from outside ourselves. That power comes when we surrender our will to God’s. Bishop Holston has encouraged us to dream God-size dreams – this seems to fit!” *“He is able to do above and beyond all that we can ask or think.” - Ephesians 3:20*

Q: What will the financial impact be to the BSUMC operating budget in 2017 and 2018?

The SC Annual Conference will support the adoption by paying a portion of the new minister’s salary and benefits for four years. There would be additions of income and expenses that would be shown in our budget as separate accounts for BSUMC Trinity Campus and Trinity CDC. Our Finance Committee would present a preliminary budget for the remainder of 2017 and a projected budget for 2018 as soon as possible if adoption is approved. The BSUMC Finance Chair, Church Treasurer, CDC Director, CDC Chair and Treasurer have been consulted and are actively involved in the process of evaluating the financial impact. If there are any negative impact projections, the Finance Committee would determine and recommend how to use the assets available from the adoption to mitigate that impact. TUMC has sufficient assets to offset any potential financial liabilities that could be incurred during the first several years as we launch programs to grow this campus.

Q: Will members of BSUMC be asked to relocate to the Trinity Campus?

No, at least not permanently. Where our members worship should always be completely up to them. We are likely to ask that we have a strong crowd there the first Sunday if we decide to adopt, but not on an ongoing basis. We also might ask some people to consider some sort of rotation for a while, but no one will be expected to move their place of worship.

Q: Music is an important part of worship. What plans will be made concerning the music ministry at both locations?

This would need to be determined by the Transition Team and the new minister. Existing programs at BSUMC would continue and grow and follow the current long-range plans being implemented. An early thought for the Trinity Campus is to continue an 11:00 AM service on Sunday morning with the same worship style and to begin a 5:00 PM contemporary worship service on Sunday evening, which would require a worship leader as well as the possibility of additional musicians. How and when this happens and the approach to fund it is unknown right now.

Q: What will happen to our long-range plans?

Some may need to be revised, but most current long-range plans should continue as planned. This question usually seems to be asked in the context of building plans. At the moment, the future building plans are in study by a Building Committee. There are beautiful and aspirational architectural renderings, but none have yet been recommended for implementation, nor has there been any recommendation regarding a capital campaign. It is certainly possible that adoption could delay making any such recommendation, but it could also advance it. We simply cannot know right now whether or not this will advance or delay a need for change in our space utilization at BSUMC. It is well-documented nationally that whenever a church undergoes an adoption or creates a satellite campus, membership and stewardship increase across the multi-site campuses.

Q: Will this adoption tax the present staff and clergy at BSUMC beyond reasonable expectations?

There is certainly a danger of this. The solution is close alignment with current ministry leadership, adoption Transition Team, and staff leaders. As with the long-range plans, some current initiatives may need to be adjusted to accommodate the adoption.

Q: How will TUMC attract young families when their youth program is nonexistent and the children's program is quite small?

This will most certainly be an early goal of the new minister and the Transition Team. TUMC CDC is fertile ground for recruitment, as few of those parents attend the church. The 29605 ZIP code average age is 38, indicating that there are many prospective members (not currently members of a church) that could bring vibrant youth and vitality to the Trinity Campus. The adjoining ZIP code areas are also promising for attracting new members to BSUMC at both campuses.

Q: What happens to our Sunday school classes? Will any be asked to relocate to the Trinity Campus?

No, only if they choose to meet there. There are currently three active adult Sunday school classes at TUMC.

Q: How will TUMC be integrated into BSUMC?

Current committees of TUMC would merge with BSUMC committees. The Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development would immediately begin working with current members of TUMC to fill spots on committees for 2017 and 2018. Current staff at TUMC would become employees of BSUMC after undergoing the employment process of BSUMC.

We would become one church with one mission and vision, but two campuses with multiple services and programs.

Q: How will we measure the success of the adoption of TUMC?

That success will be measured by the same standards that we use currently to measure the success of BSUMC. There will be goals with measurable markers determined by the new minister, various committees, and our Ministries Leadership Team and staff.

Q: What is the rush, and why did this process have to move so fast?

There was an opportunity to have “the ideal pastor” appointed to BSUMC to serve the Trinity Campus. This opportunity would not have existed after June of this year. The timing of the adoption of TUMC this year was the most favorable timing for the TUMC congregation to remain viable.

If we believe that God is leading us to move forward with the adoption, then we should also trust His timing. We can only seek the Holy Spirit and ask for guidance to accomplish what might seem a difficult task, knowing *“that in all things, God works for the good of those who love him who have been called according to his purpose.”* – Romans 8:28

Q: How will BSUMC vote on the adoption of TUMC?

There will be two informational meetings in the Sanctuary of BSUMC during which our Senior Minister, District Superintendent, Conference Director of Congregational Development, and members of the Due Diligence Team will answer questions about the adoption. The congregation is encouraged to attend at least one of these meetings to ask questions and learn about the adoption and the vision of our leaders for the Trinity Campus. The informational meetings will be held on Sunday, March 26, at 12:00 noon, and on Wednesday, March 29, at 6:30 PM.

The Church Conference will be conducted on Sunday, April 2, at 12:00 noon in Sisk Hall. Rev. George Howle, District Superintendent, will preside over the Conference. Up to three members of the church will be allowed to speak in favor of the adoption. Up to three members of the church will be allowed to speak against the adoption. The presiding officer will allow additional questions from the membership. The vote will be taken on a paper ballot. All members of the church, to include youth that have been confirmed and retired clergy with their letter at BSUMC, are eligible to vote. In accordance with *The Book of Discipline*, only members present are eligible to vote. The ballots will be collected and immediately counted by lay people of the church. The following day, the ballots will be recounted by staff members of BSUMC. The adoption of TUMC must have the vast support of BSUMC to proceed. This adoption cannot be successful if it divides a significant portion of our church family.

Each member of Buncombe Street United Methodist Church has the responsibility to purposefully examine the information presented and prayerfully decide the best direction for our church to go. The success of the adoption of Trinity United Methodist Church depends greatly on all members of both churches being willing to commit ourselves, using our God-given gifts and talents, to make it happen. We pray that God's will be done.