

# Appendix: Lighthouse Congregations

Lighthouse Congregations are local churches that are equipped to welcome anyone whose church has closed or disaffiliated. These United Methodist faith communities are a resting place with people who will care for you while providing a haven of peace and grace. Lighthouse Congregations will:

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01

Provide a welcoming place to belong during this time of grief and transition, for as long as you need it. This includes a place with caring relationships, listening hearts, and unconditional love within a congregation that is confident it will not disaffiliate and commits to remain in the UMC. Lighthouse Congregations will provide all forms of pastoral and laity-driven care, which may include providing physical space for "Beginning Again" groups to gather as they consider what it looks like to stay together.

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02

Offer ministry opportunities in which to engage – or not. There will be no pressure. Examples include:

- **Worship:** Providing worship opportunities whether online or in person. These services will be intentional about engaging and welcoming new people into their midst. They will also include the sacraments of communion and baptism.
  - **Discipleship:** Creating space to learn and grow, through small group gatherings, Bible studies, and prayer opportunities.
  - **Mission:** Inviting fellow United Methodists into opportunities to serve through hands-on ministries that involve making a difference and sharing the love of God with others.
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03

Organize local Beginning Again groups by proactively finding and connecting with individual persons and groups that feel displaced by disaffiliating churches.

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04

Connect persons or groups with Conference and District resources to help them discern their next steps as they consider a new church home.

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Whether you are an individual or a group of people who have become displaced or churchless because of closing or disaffiliation, Lighthouse Congregations will be there for you during this difficult time. As you begin again, specific pathways from which you may choose will continue to emerge as the Conference, Districts, and local churches come together to be The Connection at its best.

Lighthouse Congregations seek to be a connecting space for those who find themselves displaced because of disaffiliation. Their mission is to provide care, a place to belong, and tangible ways to explore the next steps for those on this difficult journey. To find a Lighthouse Congregation or to learn more about remaining United Methodist, please contact Rev. Bill Brown ([bbrown@bwcumc.org](mailto:bbrown@bwcumc.org)).

We love you. We care about you. We're here for you.