



Date: October 2019  
From: Sunrise UMC Church Council  
To: The People of Sunrise Church

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

The days since the Special General Conference have been difficult for the people of The United Methodist Church. We ask all members of Sunrise UMC to join us in praying for the Methodist Church and all its people. We advocate patience so a myriad of details can be sorted.

We are saddened that our denomination's chief legislative body narrowly voted to not only retain, but to enhance and impose mandatory minimum penalties for violating disciplinary provisions that require the Church to discriminate against some of our LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning) family members in Christ. It is against that backdrop, and in this moment, that we, the Council of Sunrise United Methodist Church, make the following statement — a statement that expresses our vision of the Church that we firmly believe we are called to be, both by Scripture and by an informed understanding of the bedrock principles of Wesleyan polity and theology:

All means all. We lament that differences over interpretation of Scripture have resulted in brokenness in our denomination and conflict over our understanding of Christ's call to include fully the marginalized and oppressed in the life of the Church. Differences between Christians about scripture are not disagreements about its authority but rather about its interpretation. "An important truth to emphasize is that when we find ourselves in disagreement over something in the Bible, we are disagreeing as fellow Christians." (reference Robert Traina's inductive Bible study)

We remain where we are because we envision a brighter tomorrow and are confident it will outshine the darkness of the present moment. September 19 was the deadline for submitting legislation to be considered at 2020 General Conference. Much of this legislation will focus on the future of the UMC. We are hopeful that some of this legislation will "resolve the current impasse" regarding the denomination's ministry with LGBTQ+ persons and their families. The community of Sunrise stands committed to a future that reflects our values and recognizes Christ's call to be an open and welcoming church. Attached is a list of Church Council's current best response to questions that were submitted during an All Church meeting on May 5, 2019. This is still an evolving, complex situation, and much depends on what happens in the months to come. At this time, we don't have all the answers, but we invite you to continue to ask the hard questions and search for a way forward together.

Respectfully,

Rick Hunt

Gina Nichols

Sunrise United Methodist Church Council Co-Chairs



## WHAT QUESTIONS DO YOU HAVE FOR CHURCH COUNCIL REGARDING THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL'S RULING AND/OR THE WAY FORWARD FOR SUNRISE?

### DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

#25 What will Sunrise do to keep our own congregation informed as this plays out?

*As we find out, we'll put it in the bulletin, through Pastor's e-letter and Church website. We'll also provide a link to the Mountain Sky website dealing with the issue: [www.mtnskyumc.org/mountainskyonthewayforward](http://www.mtnskyumc.org/mountainskyonthewayforward)*

#57 Given the publicity, how do we make the LGBTQ visitors feel welcome?

*Our call is to be welcoming to anyone who comes to the door at Sunrise. All are welcome, our communion table is open to all. We have radical hospitality for all. Welcoming is one of Sunrise's strengths.*

*Exactly what we do with everyone else. As Matt said, show them the "radical hospitality" we show everyone. For the most part, they do not need or want to be singled out. As with anyone else, they want the freedom to worship and serve in the capacity God has called them to.*

#11 How will these answers be shared?

*As we find out, we'll put it in the bulletin, through Pastor's e-letter and Church website. We'll also provide a link to the Mountain Sky website dealing with the issue: [www.mtnskyumc.org/mountainskyonthewayforward](http://www.mtnskyumc.org/mountainskyonthewayforward).*

### FINANCIALS AND REAL ESTATE (we will learn more at annual conference)

#13 If we split Sunrise- some stay and some separate- do we have to pay \$?

¶2553.4b-e of the 2016 Book of Discipline lists requirements for exiting churches include the payment of apportionments, fair share of pension liabilities and other obligations.

- b) The local church shall pay any unpaid apportionment for the 12 months prior to disaffiliation as well as an additional twelve months of apportionments.*
- c) A disaffiliating local church has the right to retain its real and personal property, tangible and intangible. All cost for the transfer of title or other legal work is to be paid by the disaffiliating local church.*
- d) The local church contributes withdrawal liability in an amount equal to its pro rata share of any aggregated unfunded pension obligations to the annual conference as determined by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits.*
- e) The local church must also satisfy any other debts, loans and liabilities or assign and transfer them to its new entity prior to disaffiliation.*

*The General Council Petition 90066 on Disaffiliation allows a "gracious exit" for churches to leave the denomination and establishes "limited Rights" and requirements for those churches to disaffiliate for reasons related to church law on homosexuality and to retain local church property. The Judicial Council at its April 2019 meeting under decision 1379 declared Petition 90066 constitutional.*

*It is unclear what the unfunded clergy pension liability will cost us, because it depends largely on what Sunrise does. If Sunrise and the Mountain Sky Conference leave the Methodist Church and join some new Methodist or independent church, we may have no unfunded liability since we will still be part of the conference, which is the core unit with the General Board of pensions. If Sunrise decides to go it alone as an independent church, we would then be on the hook for this unfunded pension liability. There are a number of ways that liability could be determined, and depending on the one chosen, could cost us anywhere from \$256,000 to \$407,000. In addition, we could be liable for fully funding our wider missions for the year in which we leave, 2020 for example, as well as an additional year as well. That could be as much as \$100,000 to \$200,000.*

*It is important to note that all of this is very fluid and subject to change at the last minute. Rumors abound about how the next General Conference will be structured and what that means for our conference and Sunrise. It would be very*

*premature to base any decisions on the material I provided above. Instead, we should continue to monitor the situation and see where we are when the dust settles. Knowing the potential financial impact of what is being discussed is always prudent.*

**#14** What are the pension payout numbers? Unfunded liabilities? What is the apportionment \$?

*Pension payout numbers, unfunded liabilities, and apportionments are time and situationally dependent variables. Until there is clear timing and an enunciated path for Sunrise to take it will be difficult to specifically enumerate these dollar amounts. The formula for calculating these liabilities can be found in the combined answer to questions #13, 17 & 19.*

**#17** If Sunrise, by church vote, decides to separate, what is the financial implication to the congregation?

¶2553.4b-e of the 2016 Book of Discipline lists requirements for exiting churches include the payment of apportionments, fair share of pension liabilities and other obligations.

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- c)** A disaffiliating local church has the right to retain its real and personal property, tangible and intangible. All cost for the transfer of title or other legal work is to be paid by the disaffiliating local church.
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**#18** Does each conference have its own real estate?

*The Sunrise Church building is titled under the names Sunrise United Methodist Church and Extension Society Inc. The Rocky Mountain United Methodist Foundation holds the Mortgage.*

¶ 2501. All properties of United Methodist local churches and other United Methodist agencies and institutions are held, in trust, for the benefit of the entire denomination, and ownership and usage of church property is subject to the Discipline.

*Titles are not held by The United Methodist Church or by the General Conference of The United Methodist Church, but instead by the incorporated conferences, agencies, or organizations of the denomination, or in the case of unincorporated bodies of the denomination, by boards of trustees established for the purpose of holding and administering real and personal, tangible and intangible property.*

*Local churches and other United Methodist agencies and institutions may acquire, hold, maintain, improve, and sell property for purposes consistent with the mission of the Church, unless restricted or prevented by the Book of Discipline.*

**#19** If Sunrise does the “graceful exit”, what happens to the physical building?

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**#26** How soon can we know the financial impact? To Sunrise?

***There are several decisions and factors which would impact the Conference’s and Sunrise’s finances. Until there is a clear and enunciated path for Sunrise to take it will be difficult to measure a financial impact at this point in time.***

**#55** If the Mountain Sky Conference were to leave in mass to whom are the appointments paid, alleviate appointments made, etc?

***Most of the discussion regarding disaffiliation revolves around the disaffiliation of local churches where the Conference remains intact as a traditional church. As such legal, financial and personnel matters which would arise if a Conference were to be disaffiliated are not fully resolved at this point in time.***

**#56** What are “unfunded pension liabilities”?

***An unfunded pension liability is the dollar amount a pension is short in funding to completely fulfill its obligation to pay retirement benefits to retirees.***

#### **DECISIONS PROCESS AT SUNRISE**

**#8** What is the process for Sunrise to decide what we are doing?

***The process is the meetings we’ve had and will continue to have. We’ll publish relevant information as it comes to us. The Church Council will meet for a consensus and then culmination will be a Church Conference where all members will have voice and vote.***

**#10** We want to know what our pastors and leadership decision is. What is their recommendation for the congregation?

What are our pastors and leaders going to do- stay or separate?

***Right now, nothing has been finalized at the Global Church level. What the Global UMC will look like in the future is in an extreme state of flux, so no decisions must be made just yet.***

***When the times comes for a decision, for the lay leadership, and for church members, this is an individual decision to be prayerfully considered. We encourage each member to use Wesley’s Quadrilateral “Scripture, Tradition, Reason, Experience” in making their decisions.***

***At this point, Olon’s view is best expressed in the letter he sent to the congregation. The Mountain Sky Conference pathway will likely be our best path, but there is lots of work still to be done and nothing has been decided for Sunrise yet. Matt is inclined to go with the direction Sunrise goes in. We must wait for the results of the 2020 General Conference (May 15-20) and the Mountain Sky 2020 Annual Conference (June 18-21).***

***Even after that, there will be much work to do. We’ll be listening for options and our timeline must be quite flexible.***

**#30** Will our entire congregation have a voice or a vote on leaving? On the direction of the church?

***Yes, there will be a Church Conference vote. All members will have voice and vote.***

**#33** Who leaves? How is it determined? (if we do?)

***This question is premature; nothing has been decided on which direction Sunrise is going. We will be waiting for the results of the 2020 General Conference and the 2020 Annual Conference to see what decision, if any, is needed.***

**#34** What direction will we go? ***No one knows right now.***

**#43** By not adhering to the Traditional Plan, what is the impact to Sunrise?

***We'll need to see the results of the 2020 General Conference. Even then, it may not be immediately clear.***

**#48** Would separation decisions be at the church level or conference level?

***Conference level will most likely make the first decision, then it will go to the individual church level.***

### **TIMELINE AND IMPLEMENTATION**

**#3** 60-80% of bishops in the U.S. supported the One Church Plan- can this (Traditional Plan) really be enforced?

***This is difficult to ascertain. We will know more after the results of the 2020 General Conference.***

**#12** Will we delay to as close to the 2020 deadline to make a decision?

***Yes. There are many events that will take place between now and 1/1/2020. Those events might influence the direction of Sunrise or create decision points we need to make.***

**#15** Does the vote to stay or separate require a 2/3 body of membership or those present to vote?

***According to the "graceful exit" plan, it will take a 2/3 vote of those members present at a church conference vote. That is 1 of 3 requirements for an individual church to disaffiliate. There is a non-legalese summary about 2/3 down this webpage: <https://www.umnews.org/en/news/court-oks-part-of-traditional-plan-exit-plan> and the exact judicial text here: <http://www.umc.org/decisions/79923>.***

**#20** What happens 1/1/2020?

***There are many events that will take place between now and 1/1/2020. Those events might influence the direction of Sunrise or create decision points we need to make.***

**#23** Is there a timeline?

***There are some other points in time that may become important in following the progress of the situation. June 18-21, 2020 is the Annual Conference for the Mountain Sky Conference; May 5-15, 2020 is the General Conference.***

**#28** Do we have a time line for these decisions to be implemented?

***The timeline for the decision to take effect is 1/1/2020. There are some other points in time that may become important in following the progress of the situation. June 18-21, 2020 is the Annual Conference for the Mountain Sky Conference; May 5-15, 2020 is the General Conference.***

**#47** What is the timeline?

***The timeline for the decision to take effect is 1/1/2020. There are some other points in time that may become important in following the progress of the situation. June 18-21, 2020 is the Annual Conference for the Mountain Sky Conference; May 5-15, 2020 is the General Conference.***

## **THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE AND LEGALITIES**

**#4** Is the exclusionary piece included in the original constitution- or when amended?

***The exclusionary language is in the Book of Discipline rather than the Constitution. It was added in 1972 during the merging of the Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren denominations into the United Methodist Church.***

**#6** U.S. law allows same-sex marriage, so will we violate U.S. law? Or just deny God's blessing on the marriage?

***US Law allows discrimination on the basis of religion specifically for religious organizations. As far as God bestowing or denying His blessing on a marriage, that's up to Him, not us.***

**#7** How will the UMC council enforce the penalties if a church leaves the UMC?

***If a church leaves the UMC, it will no longer be under the rules. So they won't be enforceable. However, the path to disaffiliation involves several considerations. There was partner legislation to ease the path, but that is now under scrutiny.***

**#24** What is the body that is officially empowered to remove the Bishop? (College of Bishops)

***The Council of Bishops is the typical body. However, it's unclear what level of the organization would need to/ be willing to remove Bishop Oliveto upon activation of the traditional plan. When it's a case of breaking rules, it would generally go through the Judicial Council. However, when her appointment as Bishop was challenged and referred to Judicial Council, they decided against enforcement.***

**#27** Will the Bishop's view/statements impact our own church? Does that give liberty to the churches in the Mountain Sky Conference to do the same?

***No, the Bishop's view does not directly impact the churches in the Mountain Sky Conference. One of the goals of the One Church plan was to allow local context to determine theology and policy. We believe that's still a core aspect of Bishop Oliveto's desire to serve all the churches in our conference. Per council member Rick Hunt, "I've personally heard Bishop Oliveto state more than once that she does not want to lead a Progressive Church, she wants a church that serves everyone."***

**#29** If Bishop Oliveto is out, what happens next?

***Presumably, the removal of Bishop Oliveto would also include a replacement being named.***

**#31** Was this last constitutional decision made by a "world" body?

***Yes, the General Conference is the international body of the UMC. It's worth noting that instead of waiting for the normal 4 year cycle, this was a specially called General Conference for the purpose of this vote.***

**#32** How does the jurisdiction flow...power wise, who impacts who?

***This question is extremely relevant and also extremely difficult to answer. There are a couple of anchor points that we can set. The highest body of power is the General Conference, which meets every 4 years. The more active level of the organization is the Annual Conference. Annual Conferences roll up to a jurisdiction (Western Jurisdiction for us), but that body only has a few specific roles (election and appointment of bishops, every 4 years). Separate from the hierarchy is the Judicial Council, which serves as a type of Supreme Court for the entire UMC. The other body that has a voice is the Council of Bishops. According to the wording in the traditional plan, they will establish a committee to make a recommendation and then they will vote for the outcome when a Bishop is unwilling to enforce the Book of Discipline.***

**#44** What happens to the current pastors and bishops who are openly gay?

***The traditional plan calls for the Council of Bishops to administer disciplinary action for Bishops unwilling to enforce the Book of Discipline. Both Bishops and Clergy (conference board of ordained ministry) who are unable to live within the bounds of the Book of Discipline would be encouraged to transfer to a self-governing Methodist church that affirms their beliefs.***

**#46** What does it mean if the pastors and bishops do not adhere to the laws?

***UMC history since 1972 would demonstrate that it doesn't mean much of anything. With the traditional plan, there are expectations for pastors and bishops to be specific about their willingness to enforce the Book of Discipline and subsequent encouragement to transfer to a self-governing Methodist church if they are not.***

**#53** How many times has the Book of Discipline been revised?

***Revisions are made every 4 years through General Conference. If you consider the creation of the official United Methodist Church to be the start, that's 12 revisions, plus the special 2019 one. If you go back to Coke/Asbury's original establishment of Methodism in the US and the first Book of Discipline in 1784, there are probably over 100 revisions.***  
<http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/ask-the-umc-when-was-the-first-book-of-discipline-created>.

**#54** Does the U.S. Book of Discipline match the Discipline followed internationally?

***Yes, there is a single English-language Book of Discipline (2016) that applies worldwide. Some conferences are exempt from the book of discipline (for purpose of their org structure).***

**#51** Is there an option to just “ignore the issue” - not to vote on it? Because we know this issue is divisive. We love our church and understand two sides will probably not come to agreement. So can we just let it be up to the individual’s conscience?  
***This was the intention of the One Church Plan put forth by the Council of Bishops. The One Church Plan “encourages a generous unity by giving United Methodists the ability to address different missional contexts in ways that reflect their theological convictions.”***

#### **SUNRISE MEMBER AND COUNCIL STANCE**

**#1** Does Sunrise agree with the Bishop’s letter?

***In Bishop Karen’s letter, she states, “...we all know to be true: we are not of one mind when it comes to our understanding of homosexuality. By affirming the TP plan, shock waves of trauma and harm have been felt throughout our church.”***  
**Council agrees with this statement**

***She also writes, “To narrow down who is in and who is out of the United Methodist Church by imposing a “theological correctness” veers us away from our Wesleyan heritage. I value the breadth of theological understandings found in our conference, and I will continue as your bishop to do what I have done since I began to serve here: to support all our churches, pastors, and laity—no matter where they are on the theological spectrum—so that our churches can be well-equipped to be vital faith communities that offer the life-saving and life-transforming message of the Gospel in tangible ways throughout the neighborhoods and areas where they are located.”***  
**Council agrees with this statement**

**#9** Do we have to do anything? What is the default?

***The passing of the Traditional plan does not reflect the convictions of centrist and progressive United Methodists in our church community. Several in our church are hurt and alienated by the Traditional Plan. To avoid doing “anything” is to ignore their pain and ignore their value and worth as beloved children of God. It also requires that Sunrise acquiesce to the constitutional guidelines of the Traditional Plan as it goes into effect on January 1, 2020.***

**#21** Has church council made a stance on behalf of Sunrise?

**All means all. Church Council stands with Pastor Olon's March 2019 letter: [Pastor Olon's Letter](#) In addition to Pastor Olon's words of wisdom, we embrace the expertise and knowledge of seminary professors and UM elders like Steve Harper: "Marriage is defined as a holy covenant. This covenant is universal: 1. Sacredness (holiness) 2. Fidelity (faithfulness) 3. Permanency (unending), and monogamy (singular devotion). The morality of sexuality is not determined by a person's gender, identity, or orientation, but rather by honoring the commitments of the covenant. The covenant is an affirmation of inclusion available to all." We recognize that a Biblical theology for human sexuality exists.**

**#35** What process will church council take?

**First, we must outline the options available to Sunrise. They are as follows:**

- **"Just Exit Now"**
  - **Join a new denomination or network of churches**
  - **Become non-denominational**
- **"One Last Try before Exit"**
- **"Stay In and Fight"**
- **"Stay In and Conform"**

**Steps Taken by Church Council**

- **Investigating key questions**
  - **Apportionments escrow**
  - **Precise financial cost of exit, and going it alone moving forward**
  - **Wesley Foundation implications**
  - **UMC connectional ministries**
  - **Sense of congregation**

**#36** Can the church be big enough for both views?

**This was the intention of the One Church Plan put forth by the Council of Bishops. The One Church Plan "encourages a generous unity by giving United Methodists the ability to address different missional contexts in ways that reflect their theological convictions."**

**Under the Traditional Plan, there is not a place for both views. As of 2020, every Methodist Church is required to adhere to the guidelines put in place under the Traditional Plan which the Judicial Council has determined constitutional. In 2020, it is church law.**

**#37** Do we have to choose?

**The passing of the Traditional plan does not reflect the convictions of centrist and progressive United Methodists in our church community. Several in our church are hurt and alienated by the Traditional Plan. To avoid doing "anything" is to ignore their pain and ignore their value and worth as beloved children of God. It also requires that Sunrise acquiesce to the constitutional guidelines of the Traditional Plan as it goes into effect on January 1, 2020. Under the Traditional Plan, there is not a place for both views. There are several groups within the larger church that are actively working to develop a viable alternative. We must wait for the results of the 2020 General and Annual Conferences.**

**#42** Why can't the church stay the way it is?

**We must recognize that Sunrise is no longer "the way it is" after February 2019. Traditionalists who strongly support the guidelines of The Traditional Plan want to see Sunrise adhere to those guidelines. There are also those attending only because of the voices who stand against the Traditional Plan's enforcement at Sunrise. Under the Traditional Plan, there**

*is not a place for both views. As of 2020, every Methodist Church is required to adhere to the guidelines put in place under the Traditional Plan which the Judicial Council has determined constitutional. There are several groups within the larger church that are actively working to develop a viable alternative. We must wait for the results of the 2020 General and Annual Conferences.*

### DOGMA/THEOLOGY

**#38** What does “Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors” mean?

*John Wesley made experience part of his theological interpretation. Experience was his way of noting that theology is not ultimately about belief but rather about life. Opening our hearts, minds, and doors to the lives of all.*

**#41** What is the role of sin in the church? Does the Bible guide our behavior or not? Are we to strive according to the teaching of God or is our own morality the standard?

*Differences between Christians about scripture are not disagreements about its authority but rather about its interpretation. An important truth to emphasize is that when we find ourselves in disagreement over something in the Bible, we are disagreeing as fellow Christians. We must not attempt to use scripture to gain high ground over any other Christian. (reference Robert Traina)*

**#52** Can we not reach out in love but still stand on God’s authority- His word?

*As stated above, differences in interpretation do not mean we disagree on the Bible’s authority. A Biblical Theology for human sexuality exists. Christ is the lens through whom we see the revelation of God for eternity and within time. Jesus’s teaching on marriage is about a restoration of covenant -1. Sacredness (holiness) 2. Fidelity (faithfulness) 3. Permanency (unending), and monogamy (singular devotion)-this is not limited to a male/female expression of it. Any two people can honor the principles of covenant love in marriage. The fact that Jesus refers to marriage in Matthew 19:5 by using “man/woman” language is his acknowledgement of the norm for marriage in his day- indeed, for any day. But his definition is covenantal, in which he defines marriage as a relationship that has an indissoluble bond. That’s what was missing in marriage in Jesus’ day; it had ceased to be a holy bond and had become a paper contract. Thus, marriage was not manifesting the covenant love of sacredness, fidelity, permanency, and monogamy. Jesus’s teaching on marriage is about a restoration of covenant, not about a necessary “male/female” expression of it. This question could literally be the subject of a doctoral dissertation.*

### SEPARATION/SPLIT

**#5** Can the U.S. Methodist Church break away from the international?

*Yes, but we have no idea what that may look like, if it happens.*

**#22** What if the Mountain Sky Conference decides to affiliate with a new vision of Methodism?

*We’d have a Church Conference vote for all members. Once we see that result, we will do our best to implement it.*

**#39** Where can we go if we split?

*Sunrise will decide this in a Church Conference vote.*

**#40** Are there any moves for an alternate UMC?

*That is being actively explored at the Conference level and higher, nothing definite has been decided. Much depends on what happens at the 2020 General Conference.*

**#45** Will the church split into 2 organizations- Traditional and Moderate?

***That is being actively explored at the Conference level and higher, nothing definite has been decided. Much depends on what happens at the 2020 General Conference.***

**#49** How would this church survive if a 50/50 split occurred? (You would have to expect the “losing” group to go elsewhere)

***A 50/50 split would be quite unlikely. If it did, just as Jesus wept over Jerusalem, Jesus would be weeping over Sunrise. A 50/50 split would make it unlikely that Sunrise could continue.***

#### **SPECIFIC TO SUNRISE PASTORS**

**#2** Will the leadership of this church perform same-sex unions?

***From Rev. Olon: The answer is yes, if the circumstances are right. Officiating a marriage ceremony has always been born of a relationship with church members/family/individuals. I have not been asked to do a same-sex marriage. I am willing, if the couple is seriously committed. (I am available for a conversation if you would like to know more.***

***Olon@sunriseumc.com)***

**#50** Can we have a direct answer from our pastor: is homosexuality a sin? Yes or no?

***From Rev. Olon: No, you cannot have a direct answer from this pastor. This is the wrong question. Rather, I wish to live in the spirit of Jesus Words to the disciples in the Gospel of John:***

***“I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.***

***By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:34-35)***

***Perhaps the better question would be: What does it mean to be a human being in this world? The answer to that question is: To be human, to be one of God’s beloved children, is to live knowing the love and grace of God.***

***(I would recommend a video: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=0EOq-1uet\\_Y](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0EOq-1uet_Y). You can also search YouTube with "Bishop Richard Wilke: A Plea to The United Methodist Church." This video is from Bishop Richard Wilke, one of the founders of the Disciple Bible Study. He shares his own story of understanding scriptures on the matters of homosexuality.***

***Please know that I am available for a conversation if you would like to know more: Olon@sunriseumc.com)***

**#16** What drew the Zider Z group together?

***(Per Gina) I spoke with my father-in-law, Larry Nichols, who was one of the charter members of Sunrise UMC. In 1980, Larry was attending First United Methodist Church in downtown Colorado Springs. Jim Cowell was the associate pastor, and he met with a small group to discuss starting a Methodist church in north Colorado Springs. They met at a home in Rockrimmon and in early 1981, they held their first service at the Tots Learning Center on York St. There were about 20 couples (30 to 40 people) who met there for about a year. Jim Cowell was the pastor and Ray Matheson acted as the associate pastor. They then moved to another day care center on Woodmen and that was when they received their church charter. They then held a contest to come up with a name and logo. They rented a vacant restaurant called Zeider Zee from local developer, John Olive. The place was quite a mess and the small group cleaned it up and began meeting there. The group, led by Larry, Jerry Watts, and realtor Lois Moore. They eventually bought the land where we currently are from the developer of Briargate. And the rest is history...***