

Tim: Hi, I'm Tim Catlett, Executive Director for the Office of [New Faith Communities](#)

Laura: And I am Laura Wittman, Senior Pastor of [The Mills Church](#) in Rocky Mount, and the Coordinating Pastor of [The United Methodist Collective](#) of the North Carolina Conference.

Tim: The UM Collective was created to care for people in our Conference who feel disconnected or displaced due to disaffiliation. So far, around 600 people have transferred their church membership to the UM Collective of NC.

Laura: We currently have four Pastoral Chaplains who are connecting with those 600 people, and our hope is to help each person find a new faith community to call their church home. A place where they can experience worship, discipleship, mission, sacrament, and pastoral care consistent with our United Methodist traditions and values.

Tim: The number one response our chaplains are receiving from people across our Conference is that they are eager to find a new church home but that they do not want to experience the pain, the grief, and the heartache of going through the debate, or voting related to the disaffiliation process again.

Laura: So, this is where our team hopes that you might consider serving "as the connection" and if your church might be one of those places committed to welcome people who are disconnected or displaced due to disaffiliation.

If so, in partnership with churches and pastors across the Conference, we are introducing a new initiative called [Lighthouse Congregations](#).

Tim: Lighthouse Congregations are local churches in The North Carolina Conference that are committed to continue as United Methodists, and are equipped and willing to be a caring and hospitable place prepared to welcome people who are looking for a new United Methodist Church to call home.

Laura: These communities will partner with The Office of New Faith Communities, and The United Methodist Collective to serve as a resting place and a connecting space with the mission to provide worship, discipleship, mission, sacrament, and pastoral care to all who need them.

Tim: Lighthouse Congregations will be committed to the following:

- First, they are committed to being a United Methodist Church, whose primary energy is spent not on matters of debate, voting, or disaffiliation, but their primary focus and energy will be on worship, discipleship, mission, sacrament, and pastoral care.
- Churches who choose this option will have the opportunity to do so formally by engaging with their administrative council or leadership team, and approving a motion to become a lighthouse congregation.

Laura:

- Second, Lighthouse congregations are committing to providing worship opportunities whether online or in person, which are intentional about engaging and welcoming new people into the fold.
- They are also committed to relational discipleship, creating space to learn and grow, through small group gatherings, Bible studies and prayer opportunities.

Tim:

- They are committed to holistic mission, inviting fellow United Methodists into opportunities to serve through hands on ministries such as community gardens, backpack ministries, and outreach to local schools.

Laura:

- They are also committed to the sacraments and pastoral care. Lighthouse Congregations will offer communion at least one Sunday a month while also considering opportunities for communion throughout the week in events like small group gatherings or mid-week worship services.
- They will also be prepared to offer care such as hospital visits, gatherings at coffee shops, and finding ways to be available to those who are in need of pastoral care. This is not just the responsibility of the pastor but includes ways in which the congregation may engage in visitation ministries, meal trains, and communications ministries.

Tim: The process for joining this movement has been outlined on our website, nccumc.org/umcollective. If you have any questions or want to know more, please feel free to contact Laura or myself at our collective email address, umcollective@nccumc.org.

Laura: We look forward to partnering with you and sharing in this work of United Methodist connectionalism.