



## **“Why Centennial” Coffees –**

**A chance to learn, chat, and reflect with friends**

### **Session 4: Developing a personal “why” statement**

In coming months, the United Methodist denomination will be in the public eye again as the General Conference convenes in May 2024 facing the loss of 25% of its U.S. congregations and continuing debate over its policies that have excluded LGBTQ+ persons. How can we be prepared to respond when friends, colleagues, or neighbors ask “what’s going on with those Methodists”?

*What is a personal “why Centennial” statement?*

- Your description of why you value Centennial’s inclusivity or what keeps you within the United Methodist Church
- An easily remembered, easily heard sentence or two
- A way to share what you believe and to open a deeper conversation

*Characteristics of an effective “why” statement*

- Brief (20-30 seconds, 80-90 words)
- Clear/Memorable
- Authentic

*What is my “why” statement?*

- Take 5 minutes and jot down three ideas that are important to you about being a United Methodist.
- Take 5 minutes and jot down three ideas that are important to you about being a member of an inclusive congregation.

Responses to Why being a United Methodist:

- Rotating pastoral assignments
- Female leadership
- Focus on justice and inclusivity, although incomplete
- Social Action
- Acceptance of differing views
- Direct communication with God, no intermediary conduit