

2010

Cedar  
Bayou and  
Grace  
United  
Methodist  
Churches –  
Unification  
Documents



Building bridges for Christ – uniting Cedar Bayou and Grace Congregations, connecting our historic pasts to our “far more” future.

Ephesians 3:20 *“to Him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine”*

# **Plan of Unification Document for Cedar Bayou and Grace United Methodist Churches of Baytown, Texas**

*April 20, 2010*

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## **VI. Clergy and Support Staff**

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## **I: MISSION STATEMENTS**

### **Mission Statement of Unification**

Building bridges for Christ – uniting Cedar Bayou and Grace Congregations, connecting our historic pasts to our “far more” future.

Ephesians 3:20 “to Him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine”

### **Transitional Motto**

Two Pasts – One Future

### **Key Drivers**

Spirit-led

Excellence

Accountability

Fruitfulness

Inclusiveness

### **Core Values**

Radical Hospitality

Passionate Worship

Faith Forming Relationships

Risk Taking Mission

Extravagant Generosity

Connectional Ministry

Preserving our history/heritage

Commitment to children and youth

### **Mission Statement of Cedar Bayou Grace United Methodist Church**

Increase Christ’s footprint beyond our doors through bold witness, nurturing all in fruitful and faithful discipleship.

## **II. Motivating History and Present Realities for Unification**

Cedar Bayou and Grace Members have discussed merging the two congregations for several years. The time seems to be right for unification to take place and a straw poll of the members of both churches found that members are open to combining the congregations. As unification talks began a committee of ten from each church, called the Unification Team, under the leadership of facilitator Dr. Craig Gilliam, began the conversation about unification. They helped to frame the discussion and bring it to the congregations as well as agree on a basic timeline from which to work.

Leadership from the Unification Team provided congregational meetings, articles, question and answer sheets, straw votes, and general discussion.

The straw poll offered three choices for possible name for the combined church – Cedar Bayou Grace United Methodist Church, First United Methodist Church and Cornerstone United Methodist Church. The results are:

### Straw Poll Results for Cedar Bayou United Methodist Church

Cedar Bayou Grace United Methodist Church	130	76.5%
Cornerstone United Methodist Church	19	11.2%
First United Methodist Church of Baytown	21	12.4%
Total Name Votes		170

### Straw Poll Results for Grace United Methodist Church

Cedar Bayou Grace United Methodist Church	36	32.1%
Cornerstone United Methodist Church	28	25.3%
First United Methodist Church of Baytown	48	42.8%
Total Name Votes		112

For Grace members there was no clear name choice. However, Cedar Bayou members selected Cedar Bayou Grace United Methodist Church for the name of the combined church. Since the straw poll was non-binding, this unification document proposes that the new name be Cedar Bayou Grace United Methodist Church for the following reasons:

1. Combined straw poll tallies gives this name a clear edge
2. In conversations concerning unification, this name has become the one used most often
3. This name offers the new congregation a way of honoring the two great heritages
4. The new name joins both churches for a strong future

The Unification Team recognizes that Cedar Bayou and Grace have been historically strong congregations of similar size. Demographic changes in the community and aging of membership have resulted in a decline of the Grace attendance over recent years, while Cedar Bayou's facilities are vulnerable to storm surge flooding. Cedar Bayou has additional land that is out of the floodplain which can be used as the building site for a new facility. The new facility will be built when the funding and membership numbers can support the construction cost.

Many of our members know each other and are active in the community together. Each church is keenly aware of emerging generations and changing forms of worship, while valuing long-held traditions.

New facilities will dramatically strengthen our combined congregation by giving us a modern building that is conducive to current forms of worship and service while providing for larger fellowship gatherings, more Sunday school rooms, an increased church led day school program, and many other possibilities. The new site will dramatically alter our position in the community by providing greater visibility along a major highway.

We are aware that while ministry is not and should not be totally dependent on real estate, we also know that buildings foster ministry—or not. We are aware that at points in our history, our forebears saw fit to make financial sacrifices to provide spaces for us, and that we are called upon to make sacrifices for those who will follow us in lay and ordained ministry. This has been our tradition.

The congregations have long offered similar ministries which will continue with the new merged church. Each church has offered an excellent pre-school ministry. Plans are to ensure that the pre-school ministry will continue to be offered to the community. Our youth will merge to offer excellence in Christian music ministry. These are only two examples of united ministries to not only continue but grow in the days ahead.

In Baytown there are six United Methodist Churches. Of these Cedar Bayou is the largest with 1448 on the roll. Grace is third with 473. By combining these two we hope to build bridges for new members throughout the region and offer expanded services to our area. Instead of duplicating our efforts our members and staff can expand our ministries.

Grace and Cedar Bayou seek to combine, to provide a new church that will be an effective instrument of God building bridges to and for Christ in the greater Baytown area.

### III. Timeline and Process

Using the experience of other church mergers as a guide, this unification document has been prepared by the combined Board of Trustees. The Staff-Parish, Finance, Nominations and pastors as well as the Unification Team have provided guidance. The prepared document has also been sent to the District Superintendent, the Conference Director of Congregational Excellence and the Bishop for review.

Recommendations have been considered and revisions made. Leaders and pastors of the two churches met with the District Superintendent, the Reverend Dr. Roy James on several occasions starting on October 22, 2009. The joint committees of Finance met with Conference Fiscal Officer on April 28, 2010. The Superintendent will present the final document to the Cabinet and Bishop for approval as required by the *Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, 2008*.

A tentative timeline into merger included/s these steps and approvals: (dates are subject to change)

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| April 26 | 7 p.m. Grace Ministry Council vote on Plan of Unification   |
| April 27 | 7 p.m. Cedar Bayou Church Council vote on the Plan of Unification   |
| April 29 | 7 p.m. combined Trustees at Cedar Bayou to meet to incorporate any amendments by the Councils   |
| May 2    | date of Church Conferences announced in worship;<br>Unification Team meets to plan small group meetings   |
| May 3    | Copies of the Plan of Unification and announcement of Church Conferences are mailed to every member or household of both Congregations  |
| May 5—12 | Small group meetings are held for information and discussion  |
| May 16   | Cedar Bayou Church Conference 3 p.m., Dr. Roy James, presiding<br>Grace Church Conference 4:30 p.m., Dr. Roy James, presiding   |
| May 19   | Uniting Church Conference constitutes Cedar Bayou Grace United Methodist Church to elect its 2010 officers and set a 2010 budget. (These are included with the Plan of Unification for information purposes.) To be held in the sanctuary on Ferry Road. New officers begin duties. |
| June 13  | Cedar Bayou Grace United Methodist Church begins worship and Sunday School together at the Ferry Road campus  |
| July 1   | Offices and accounting merged to the Ferry Road location; new budget begins   |

In response to a positive vote on May 16, the officers and committees elected on May 19 will care for staffing, program, legal and property matters as outlined in the Plan. Trustees of Cedar Bayou Grace United Methodist Church will be in compliance with the 2008 *Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*. All covenants with donors of material objects or funds will be honored as stipulated by the donor.

The joint Trustees recommend that a building study committee for Cedar Bayou Grace United Methodist Church be elected at the fall 2010 Church Conference to begin to look at building across the street with a possible capital funds campaign planning team to be named in the spring of 2011. No date to break ground on a new facility is set at this time.

The Grace congregation desires that their pipe organ and stained glass from the Grace Sanctuary be incorporated into the new facility when it is constructed. The Cedar Bayou congregation welcomes the organ and stained glass and recognizes the significant financial and intrinsic value of the instrument and windows for the new facility.

The Cedar Bayou congregation desires to continue to use the Ferry Road facility in the days of transition and to one day relocate the Alexander Chapel to the master plan site on Highway 146. After following the required steps in the Book of Discipline and when cost estimates and funds on hand make construction feasible, then the building proposal will be brought to the Cedar Bayou Grace Church Conference for vote.

Pruett Street facilities will continue to house Grace's Kitchen and may be used for community outreach, weddings, funerals, and occasional special events, leased to public entities, private individuals and/or leased to another church congregation as long as continued operations are financially feasible.

Inventory of and decisions about retaining, storing, selling or otherwise distributing instruments and furnishings will be done by the Trustees, its appointees and/or Church Council as appropriate. Actual disposition of major items will be the decision of the Cedar Bayou Grace United Methodist Church Board of Trustees. Any decision to sell buildings will require action of the Church Conference, the District Superintendent and the South District Committee on Location and Building.

All unification actions shall be done in conformity with the 2008 *Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church or its successors*.

#### **IV. ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF THE UNITED CONGREGATION**

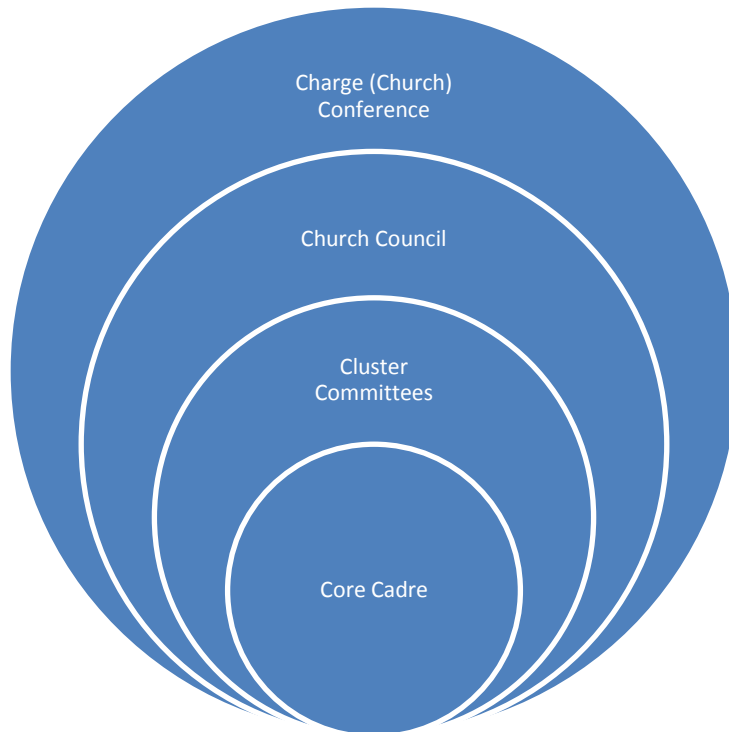
*All committee structures of Cedar Bayou Grace United Methodist Church shall abide by the Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church and the following structure incorporates the Disciplines requirements...*

##### *A New Vision for Church Structure*

We understand that churches exist for God's mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Each congregation seeks to become clear in its vision and mission in a particular geography with guiding values and key drivers. Cedar Bayou Grace United Methodist Church seeks to become a signpost of the reign of God. Cedar Bayou Grace United Methodist Church will be Christ-centered and transformational. We endeavor to be a relational community inviting the participation of all in responding to the needs of our hurting world. We work to become connected to mission opportunities both locally and globally.

Understanding that healthy congregations have a strong sense of God's mission and direction, Cedar Bayou Grace United Methodist Church believes that all are called to ministry in Jesus' name. We seek to establish a strong connection between individuals within the church and beyond our doors to the community and the world. We pledge to become a congregation dedicated to assisting members in growing in discipleship as a life-long process.

The Book of Discipline (§244) states that a local church shall include provisions for the following units: a charge (church) conference, a church council, a committee on pastor (staff) parish relations, a board of trustees, a committee on finance, a committee on nomination and leadership development. Each church shall provide a comprehensive program of nurture, outreach and witness. With this charge the Nomination and Leadership committees of Cedar Bayou and Grace submit this structure for Cedar Bayou Grace United Methodist Church.



Charge (Church) Conference  
 – meets annually of all members of congregation present to set pastor’s salary and elect officers

Church Council – meets quarterly of elected officers to vision and assess possibilities for ministry

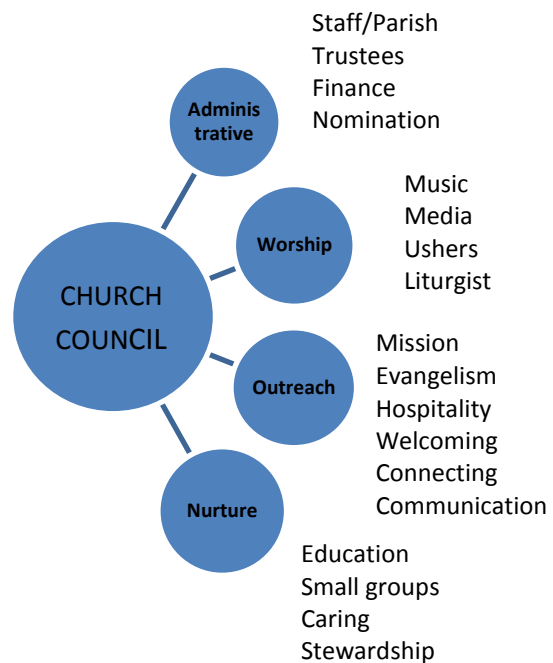
Cluster Committees – meets as needed to plan and implement ministries of administration, worship, outreach and nurture

Core Cadre – meets monthly with co-chairs of administrative and cluster committees for communication and oversight

A View of Church Council:



A View of Cluster Committees:



## **V. RECOMMENDED CLERGY AND SUPPORT STAFF OF THE CEDAR BAYOU GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

**Clergy:** Clergy appointments are the responsibility of the bishop and the cabinet, in consultation with the local church Staff-Parish Relations Committee.

It has been requested by Cedar Bayou's Staff Parish and the Unification Team that Reverend Carol Turner be selected as the senior minister for the merged church. The district superintendent has indicated that this is acceptable.

The combined Staff-Parish Committees of Cedar Bayou and Grace United Methodist Churches have also jointly asked for an associate pastor to be appointed to Cedar Bayou Grace United Methodist Church should the merger be approved.

### **Program and Support Staff:**

The joint meetings of the Staff Parish Relations Committees have worked to combine the staffs of the two congregations. Neither congregation has replaced recent job openings (Cedar Bayou's financial secretary or Grace's choir director). Exact job titles and job descriptions will be worked out individually with staff after the Plan of Unification is approved.

The combining of our staffs will provide for expanding ministries especially to children, youth and to the community.

As ministries emerge and funds allow, ministry staff may be added.

## **VI: CLERGY AND SUPPORT STAFF**

Clergy will be appointed with consultation between the joint Staff Parish Relations committees or the Cedar Bayou Grace United Methodist Church Staff Parish Committee.

The Staff Parish Committee and our pastors will continue to work with the staff in the days ahead to clarify roles and blend efforts.

## **VII: LAND AND PROPERTY OF THE CEDAR BAYOU GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

All real and personal property presently owned will become the property of the unified church. During the interim period between the positive vote to merge and the final merger date, the Trustees of each church shall be in charge of making a detailed inventory of all contents of each church. Gifts in memoriam and in honor shall be so noted. All requests pertaining to contents of any of the properties shall be submitted to the new Board of Trustees in writing so that appropriate action can be considered. All other contents shall be kept or disposed of by Trustees or their appointed representatives.

All membership and baptismal records from both churches shall be maintained with secured backups. Important historical documents will also be securely stored. The churches may choose to keep some historical records with the Archives of the Texas Annual Conference through its archivist in consultation with the Archives and History committee. These efforts will be under the direction of the Senior Pastor and a subcommittee of the Board of Trustees.

All land and physical improvements shall be the property of the unified church.

The Trustees of the combined Cedar Bayou Grace United Methodist Church will assess the condition of and the need for retention of all current church facilities including parsonages. If a sale is indicated, proceeds from the principal shall be kept in accordance with the *Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*.

## **VIII. MANAGEMENT OF EXISTING FINANCIAL ASSETS**

The financial assets of each church as of March 31, 2010 are set forth in Attachment A, prepared by each church's Finance Committee and Board of Trustees. A proposed budget prepared by the joint Finance Committees for Cedar Bayou Grace United Methodist Church is Attachment C.

Upon unification, all financial assets shall become the assets of the Cedar Bayou Grace United Methodist Church. The utmost care will be taken to ensure the use of specified assets in accordance with their original stated purpose.

## **IX. FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND PLANNING FOR NEW SITE AND BUILDING**

The Cedar Bayou Grace United Methodist Church congregation will use the existing Cedar Bayou facilities for worship services until a new facility is constructed. Every effort will be made to raise funds for the planning and construction of the new facility. Statistically, promptness in this effort increases the probability for the combined church to grow and expand its mission and ministry. Existing Cedar Bayou development plans will be reviewed and updated as appropriate for the new congregation.

The joint Trustees recommend that a building study committee for Cedar Bayou Grace United Methodist Church be elected at the fall 2010 Church Conference to begin to look at building across the street with a possible capital funds campaign planning team to be named in the spring of 2011. No date to break ground on a new facility is set at this time.

## **X. RESOLUTION OF ACCEPTANCE AND INTENT**

### **Unification Resolution**

#### **Cedar Bayou United Methodist Church and Grace United Methodist Church**

WHEREAS, the membership of the Grace United Methodist Church of Baytown, Texas has prayerfully considered how best to use its gifts, talents, and resources to further the mission of Jesus Christ and his church; and

WHEREAS, the Grace United Methodist Church congregation has concluded that a unification merger with another congregation within the City of Baytown would provide for the best stewardship of its people and resources; and

WHEREAS, the relationship between Grace United Methodist Church and Cedar Bayou United Methodist Church has been one of mutual respect and support since Grace United Methodist Church was founded in 1919 in Goose Creek; and

WHEREAS, Cedar Bayou United Methodist Church feels that this unification will help both churches more effectively fulfill their ministry and looks forward to forming a new unified church with the Grace United Methodist Church members; and

WHEREAS, the majority of active members of each church at duly constituted church conferences held on May 16, 2010, have voted to unify; and

WHEREAS, the District Superintendent, The Reverend Dr. Roy James has approved of the unification; and

WHEREAS, the resident Bishop Janice Riggle Huie and her cabinet of the Texas Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church have approved the action proposed in this resolution,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that in accordance with the *2008 Book of Discipline* and the Unification Document of said churches that the Cedar Bayou and Grace United Methodist Churches be declared unified as one congregation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the new congregation will be named Cedar Bayou Grace United Methodist Church and that all assets and real property of the former churches become the assets and real property of the Cedar Bayou Grace United Methodist Church.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the members of both churches will become members of the Cedar Bayou Grace United Methodist Church.

FURTHERMORE, both congregations see this unification as the marriage of two churches with rich and extensive histories of serving our Lord Jesus Christ in the East Harris County and West Chambers County areas since 1844. We anticipate the increase of Christ's footprint beyond our doors through bold witness, nurturing all in fruitful and faithful discipleship. We pray God's blessing upon this union.

**XI. CERTIFIED RESOLUTION**

SIGNATURES OF THE UNIFICATION TEAM LEADERS, ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL CHAIRS, THE BOARDS OF TRUSTEES, PASTORS, PRESIDING CHAIR OF THE CHURCH CONFERENCES, and PRESIDING SECRETARIES:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Roy James, Presiding Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Reverend Carol Turner, Pastor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Presiding Secretary, Cedar Bayou

\_\_\_\_\_  
Reverend Beverly Tune, Pastor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Presiding Secretary, Grace

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