

Frequently Asked Questions

How did we get here?

In early March, Pastor Dave Pagura of Christian Endeavor was informed by District Superintendent Tim Bias that Bishop Palmer and the Cabinet would be providing space for Engage Newark by making the building of Christian Endeavor their new home. He was informed that Dave Warner would be appointed as pastor with the intention to eventually merge the two congregations together.

In the meantime, Church in the Mall discovered their new lease agreement was increasing 127% which was not sustainable for their continued viability long term. They began the search for a new location and discussed all available options with other churches.

On March 11, Dave Warner was informed by Superintendent Tim Bias that he would be appointed to Christian Endeavor with the goal of eventually merging the two churches together. At this time Tim and Dave discussed the recent difficulties experienced by Church in the Mall. This was the first time Church in the Mall and Engage Newark seriously discussed merger (over the years it had been discussed previously and superficially).

On March 13, Dave Warner was informed that Engage Newark's lease was going to be changed, threatening the continued viability of Engage Newark at their location at 31 West Church Street. That same day, March 13, Pastor Dave Warner and Pastor Dave Pagura met for the first time to discuss the ability to merge our churches to one location at Christian Endeavor following the instructions of the West Ohio Cabinet.

On March 14, the Engage Newark Leadership Team voted to extend invitations to begin discussions to merge with Church in the Mall and Christian Endeavor respectively. By Wednesday, March 20, both churches responded to the invitation affirmatively to begin discussions for merger.

At first our communication was haphazard as none of this was official yet because things needed to happen at the Cabinet level and Dave Warner needed to be introduced at Christian Endeavor by Tim Bias. The time period from March 21 through April 1 was busy with Holy Week, Easter and the excitement of new things happening.

On April 1 we began our weekly staff meetings, at first including Pastor Dave Warner from Engage, Pastor Mariah Miskimen from Church in the Mall, Pastor Dave Pagura from Christian Endeavor and Karrie Miller from Engage Newark as worship leader. This group has continued to meet weekly, adding in Clif Smith from Christian Endeavor and Kevin Koske from Church in the Mall on April 15.

On April 5, we began our official coaching relationship with Rev. Joe Graves who would walk us through the process for merger and give us clear pathways for merge and non-merge options.

On April 15, Rev. Rachel Billups from Engage Newark's partner church, New Albany UMC, came to our weekly staff meeting to talk through merger issues. At that time, she challenged us to commit to a year of effort or determine quickly if we each are needing to be in ministry in a different way or capacity. This was a challenge each staff person took to heart. The next day, April 16, Pastor Dave Pagura of Christian Endeavor announced his resignation effective Sunday, April 28.

On April 22, our staff meeting of Dave Warner, Mariah Miskimen, Kevin Koske, Karrie Miller and Clif Smith met to develop our next steps together and make preparations for future cross-over events.

What's the end goal?

We see a large community of followers of Jesus gathering together, growing in faith and going from this body to create impact all over our city and beyond. We see a body of people where everyone is

welcomed and accepted no matter their socio-economic status, their skin color, or who they love, they will find in us faithful friends. We see a place that is modern, safe and beautiful to welcome our neighbors to gather that is warm and welcoming. We see a hub for ministry where people are equipped and ministries are incubated to go beyond the walls of the church to make a difference in the lives of people in our neighborhoods. We see a structure where people are encouraged to serve and grow in their discipleship inside the church and out. We see a full-integration of life together to be a shining beacon of Jesus' light of love set on a hillside for all to see how we can live in kingdom-community together.

How will we work together to become cohesive?

We are working through a process with our merger coach, Joe Graves that outlines a step by step process for our executive team of pastors, our leadership teams and our congregation members. This process will take longer than our June 30 date for the first Sunday together. We plan to have most of our work for merger done somewhere in the October to December 2024 timeframe. Also, please note that we are not limited to this schedule which can be found at the end of this document.

What do the next 8 weeks (May 1-June 23) look like?

Engage Newark

- Engage Newark will continue the process of discussing merger with Church in the Mall and Christian Endeavor. We will begin to identify items that must be moved to the new location as we close-out our use of 31 West Church Street and 25 West Church Street locations. Sunday mornings will provide time for congregants and leaders to share memories and say goodbye, culminating in a farewell service on June 23.

Church in the Mall

- Church in the Mall will continue the process of discussing merger with Engage Newark. We will begin packing and moving items to take to the new location. Sunday mornings will provide time for congregants and leaders to share memories and say goodbye, culminating in a farewell service on June 23.

Christian Endeavor

- Christian Endeavor will have Pastor Dave Warner as our senior pastor, however, Sunday morning leadership will be shared between Pastor Dave, Rev. Kevin Koske and Pastor Mariah Miskimen. We will coordinate our message series so it is consistent. We will work to prepare space and our hearts to welcome in our brothers and sisters who are coming to us in need.

Working Together and Opportunities to Meet

- We will prepare the building and our hearts to receive new brothers and sisters into our family. Our leadership teams will do the good work of discussing merger and taking next steps according to the plan laid out in our coaching. We will continue with monthly "cross-over" events that will allow the people of each church to get to know one another: April 28, May 19, June 2.

Is the leadership alike in each group?

Currently

- All three churches follow the "one-board" model and are otherwise generally consistent with Book of Discipline requirements for United Methodist Churches. Until the mergers are finalized, each leadership team will meet jointly together and separately/independently as needed.

Merged

- We will continue to follow the "one-board" model by combining leaders from each of the three boards coming together. There will be representation from each church so long as there is willing

members from each church to participate. We will follow a nominating and application process for the new leadership team.

Pastoral Staff

- Dave Warner, who planted and pastors Engage Newark – Full time
- Mariah Miskimen, who pastors Church in the Mall – Full time
- Kevin Koske, who planted and pastors Church in the Mall – Part time

Lay Staff

- Karrie Miller, Worship Leader/Administrative Assistant at Engage Newark – Part time
- Marcy Perrin, Worship Leader at Church in the Mall – Part time
- Debbie Palm, Administrative Assistant at Christian Endeavor – Part time
- Clif Smith, Communications and Building Supervisor at Christian Endeavor – Part time
- Reggie Byrd, Powerline Ministries (Recovery/Reentry) at Engage Newark – Part time
- Sarah Duff, Communications at Engage Newark – Part time
- Michelle Untied, Children's Ministry at Engage Newark – Part time
- Chrystina Tharp, Little Arrows Play Café Director at Engage Newark – Part time

What will worship look like?

Engage Newark and Church in the Mall have a similar flow to contemporary worship while Christian Endeavor UMC has a traditional order with readings, prayers, music, and message. Above all, we will see to it that we are worshiping God in spirit and in truth as Jesus directed. To do so, we are working together to create a style that suits who we are becoming as well as a style that will also reach people in the area who do not have a church home. We know that we will offer a worship service that will have modern music and a more modern feel to worship. We are also planning to offer an additional service that is a blending of traditional and modern or solely traditional. Having asked for input from the three churches to gauge what our combined preferences are with the Church Values Survey, we are working now to plan worship services.

There will likely be 2 services beginning June 30, one traditional and one contemporary.

What do you think the Children's Ministry look like?

One of our first goals is to blend the children's ministries from Engage Newark and Church in the Mall and invite Christian Endeavor UMC interested individuals to join our efforts. Engage Newark and Church in the Mall ministries to children is very similar and we expect that we will retain the model that we both use—large teaching with small group breakouts for age groups. We will be using [Orange Curriculum](#) for our teaching which encourages fruit of the Spirit character development along with Bible story teaching at age-appropriate levels. We anticipate offering a nursery, a preschool and kindergarten combined group, as well as a Grades 1-5 group that will divide into Grades 1-3 and Grades 4-5 small groups. To accomplish this we are bringing teams together and updating classrooms with paint, decor, and materials to best minister to these age groups.

Currently our plan is to offer just one hour of children's programming that will run concurrently with the contemporary worship service.

What about Student Ministry (Grades 6-12)?

We hope to discern together a discipleship approach for preteens (grades 6-8) and teens (grades 9-12) in the coming months.

Is there an opportunity to access transportation?

Both Church in the Mall and Engage Newark have folks who walk to church each Sunday, this is an area of great concern for our leadership and we are looking at ways to provide transportation to these individuals and families so they can remain a vital part of the new congregation that is forming.

Are there existing Small Group structures?

Each church has our own unique styles for conducting adult discipleship. We will work to provide a cohesive plan for discipleship and fellowship for all ages. Meanwhile, the groups that are currently going have no need to stop but we would like to see them opened up for folks from other churches to join if possible. We will coordinate with the on-going calendar of Christian Endeavor for building usage for any on-going small groups and Bible studies.

Can we have a Directory to get to know everyone?

Yes! We will look for ways to do a directory that is non-invasive for people with privacy concerns and also give everyone a chance to know and be known within the congregation. This may take us time to put together as it can be a big undertaking and we may have other pressing concerns amongst the staff team until a volunteer is ready to take on this helpful project.

Will there be financial help from the district and conference of West Ohio?

Yes, we are working on a large proposal to the district and conference to help with deferred maintenance projects on the Christian Endeavor property. This includes getting 3 bids each on HVAC repair/replacement, roof repair/replacement and sound and lighting equipment for the sanctuary. An arrangement will be reached with the district/conference where they will contribute some finances and we will contribute some finances.

Will there be community outreach projects to work on together?

Yes! All three congregations have community outreach projects that they are currently passionate about and support. Over time we will identify who we are as a congregation and what we feel God is calling us to be and to do unified together, until then, we will do our best to support the on-going outreach projects that each congregation already has going.

What is Little Arrows Play Café and what will happen with it?

Little Arrows Play Café is the primary outreach arm for Engage Newark, it was started in the summer of 2017 prior to the church launch the following spring. It is a daily ministry to families with young children and we anticipate keeping Little Arrows as an introductory mission and ministry to our community to bring the people not-yet of Jesus in connection to the people of Jesus. It will remain located downtown at 29 West Church Street in the historic Newark Arcade.

Will the new church be “Come As You Are”?

Yes! All three congregations that are working together are “come as you are” congregations – and we really mean it. Whatever walk of life you are coming from and whatever your background and no matter what happened that day or the previous night or week or month in your life, you will be welcomed in our church!

Am I invited to this “new church”? Will I be welcome in this church?

Yes! All three churches are filled with people that seek to ensure that everyone is welcome and are committed to keeping this value at the forefront of who we will become together. We need your presence, prayers, and help as we move forward into what God has for us.

How can I help?

Pray! Join our prayer efforts as we begin this process. Christian Endeavor UMC is located at 1415 Londondale. Playing off the 1415 we found the verse in 1 Corinthians 14:15 to be appropriate to guide us. We invite you to join us in praying everyday at 2:15 pm (or 14:15 military time) for this transition.

Workdays and Move Days: we will have workdays at Christian Endeavor UMC to prepare the hospitality areas and children's ministry areas (our first one is Saturday, May 18) as well as scheduled packing and moving days at Church in the Mall and Engage Newark.

What about all the stuff from the churches that are moving?

Engage Newark does not have much in the way of "stuff" since Little Arrows is staying downtown, none of the children's ministry items will be moving. There are a few bins of items to transport, but we will still have an office and ministry functions downtown.

Church in the Mall on the other hand has quite a bit of stuff. We plan to schedule a time for some folks from Church in the Mall and Engage to walk through Church in the Mall to determine what goes to Christian Endeavor UMC. If this is something that you are interested in being involved in, let us know by texting: "moving" to 833.332.8915.

Once we determine what moves with us, we can determine how best to deal with the rest (give, trash/recycle, sell). Everything within Church in the Mall and Church in the Mall 2 will need to be cleared out when we move.

What will the name be?

This is a great question. In a spirit of loving witness and grace toward each other, we are all open to new church names and branding for the churches that merge together to become a new body. We will have a process for this in due time. Our hope would be to have a name and brand revealed in time for an outreach event as school begins in the fall of 2024.

Will there be coffee?

Yes! We will be working to combine our hospitality resources and people to be welcoming to everyone who comes to be on the journey with us.

What is the process for merger should churches choose to merge?

Step 1

- Separate Town Hall Meetings
- Joint Townhall meeting, with food and relationship-building activity
- Each church board prepares one-page of "non-negotiables" and holds Joint board meeting to discuss this and overall process.

Step 2

- Hold joint board meeting to discuss non-negotiables and overall process.
- Begin preparations of building for arrival of new churches

- First Merger Conversation
 - Introductions
 - Work on Mission Statement (from non-negotiables work)

Step 3

- Church in the Mall and Engage Newark move into space at Christian Endeavor
- Release Survey to congregation
- Second Merger Conversation –
 - Set Joint Mission Statement
 - Work on Joint Values
- Hold Joint Finance Meeting
 - Discuss Joint Income; Expenses
 - Work on Joint Budget; Staffing Plan

Step 4

- Third Merger Conversation.
 - Work on shared values and rule of life.
- Hold Second Joint Board Meeting to discuss specific terms of merger:
 - Discuss Church name and survey results.
 - Set Joint Budget (and staffing plan)
 - Discuss Charter Process
 - Board Policy and Leadership Structure
- Form joint nominations team and finalize board application.

Step 5

- Fourth Merger Conversation
 - Discuss Draft Merger Document, make edits
 - Discuss proposed Joint Church Name
 - Finalize Membership and Charter Plans
- Release new board applications.
- Share update with District Superintendent

Step 6

- Fifth Merger Conversation
 - Finalize Plans for Church Conference
 - Celebrate the work accomplished - Throw a party!
- Finalize Merger Document, provide to members for final review.
- Hold Church Conference to Vote on Merger – each church must have 2/3 majority vote yes for merger to take place.

Step 7

- Grand Opening!
- Outreach Event