

**Recommendation for Discontinuation of
Prunedale Community United Methodist Church**

*Submitted By: Reverend Mark Buenafe, Pastor
And the Prunedale Community United Methodist Church
Fiscal Impact: There is no projected fiscal impact to the Annual Conference.*

Background:

Prunedale United Methodist Church was first incorporated as the Prunedale Community Sunday School on September 25, 1945. Within a year, it was organized in 1946 as the Prunedale Community Methodist Church with Rev. Morse A. Trine as its first pastor. It became Prunedale (Community) United Methodist Church following the 1968 merger. A unique piece of history is that the Prunedale UMC building used to be a restaurant. Prior to being a church, this was known as Mary's Chicken Shack, a popular restaurant in the early days of Prunedale's history. On November 21, 1992, Mary's Chicken Shack was 're-opened' for one day with chicken dinners as the Prunedale United Methodist Church supported the North Monterey County Outreach Program. Prunedale Church has been a small rural church, with much vitality in Christian ministry to the local Salinas Valley community and the world.

Over the years, the younger generation has moved to more urban areas, and the attendance and leadership has decreased. The membership has become so small that the remaining leadership is unable to carry the ministry forward in the manner in which they believe to be faithful stewardship. In September 2015, the Administrative Council decided to explore their capacity for fruitful ministry through the Paragraph 213 process. In November 2015, D.S. Staci Current worshipped with the congregation. Following a meaningful time of worship, Pastor Mark Buenafe and the church leaders invited DS Current into their discernment process. It should be celebrated that in spite of Prunedale Community United Methodist Church experiencing shrinking membership and income, they have always faithfully continued to support our United Methodist connection by paying 100% of their tithes (formerly known as apportionments.) In this spirit of faithful stewardship Prunedale Community UMC has decided to discontinue and become a legacy congregation. Their decision is rooted in the hope that new life will come as a result of this decision. The congregation is deeply committed to the vision and mission of the United Methodist Church.

The following steps were taken in the discernment process:

1. On September 1, 2015, a letter was sent by Pastor Mark Buenafe and the Prunedale Community United Methodist Church Administrative Council asking to engage in the Paragraph 213 to explore their viability for continuing ministry. The letter cited prior consultation with the previous District Superintendent, Rev. Kristie Olah regarding the need to explore their viability. DS Current and Pastor Buenafe consulted regarding several issues

1 that caused concern for future ministry; such as the building and parsonage in dire need of
2 significant repair, decreasing membership, and increasing workload with fewer members
3 able to serve.

- 4 2. November 1, 2015: D.S. Staci Current met with the congregation to explore the possibility
5 of engaging in a Paragraph 213 at the request of the pastor and congregation. During this
6 time of worship and consultation it was discerned that the while the congregation still
7 somewhat had the ability to continue on, there was a desire to use their resources to plant the
8 seeds of future ministry before they were exhausted in maintaining the status quo. They also
9 expressed their fatigue and desire to discontinue with grace, faithfulness, and meaning. D.S.
10 Current suggested the concept of becoming a legacy congregation that would intentionally
11 discontinue in an effort to allow their resources to be used in new and creative ways. Pastor
12 Buenafe and the Prunedale Community Church prayerfully agreed that this course of action
13 felt like the leading of the Holy Spirit. Pastor Buenafe, D.S. Current, and the Prunedale
14 congregation agreed to continue praying and seeking the next steps in this process.
- 15 3. April 30, 2016: D. S. Current along with Rev. Cate Noellert and Rev. Kristie Olah of the
16 Annual Conference's Legacy Team held a meeting with the Prunedale Church to explore
17 what it would mean to become a legacy church. There was much thoughtful discussion,
18 worship, and prayer.
- 19 4. April 30, 2016: D.S. Current called a special charge conference with one business item on
20 the agenda; the discontinuation of Prunedale Community United Methodist Church. A
21 motion was made to discontinue Prunedale Community United Methodist Church on June
22 30, 2016.
23 The motion passed with six votes in agreement, none opposed, and one abstention. After
24 prayer and reflection, it was agreed that Rev. Cate Noellert would partner with D.S. Current,
25 Pastor Buenafe and the Prunedale Church to facilitate the process of becoming a legacy
26 congregation.

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28 The following steps were taken in the approval process:

- 29 1. April 30, 2016: After almost six months of prayer, consultation and discernment the Church
30 Conference of the Prunedale Community United Methodist Church voted (6-0-1) to
31 discontinue and liquidate their assets through the Monterey Bay Church Extension Society.
- 32 2. May 2016: The San Jose District Board of Location and Building approved the proposal to
33 allow the Monterey Bay Church Extension Society to sell the church property.
- 34 3. May 27, 2016: The Bishop and Cabinet unanimously consented (vote 8-0-0) to the plans for
35 discontinuation developed by the Prunedale Community United Methodist Church.

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37 **Therefore, be it resolved** as follows that:

- 1 1. In accordance with the provisions of ¶ 2549.2 The 2012 Book of Discipline, Prunedale
2 Community United Methodist Church in Prunedale, CA be discontinued effective June 30th,
3 2016.
- 4 2. Prunedale Community United Methodist Church membership will be transferred to Marina
5 United Methodist Church in Marina, CA.
- 6 3. Title and possession of all real and personal property, assets and liabilities of the Prunedale
7 Community United Methodist Church shall be transferred to the Monterey Bay Church
8 Extension Society for missional outreach to the Monterey Bay community. A memorial
9 scholarship fund will be maintained by the Monterey Bay Church Extension Society to be
10 disbursed in 2017 upon the high school graduation of the youngest member of the Prunedale
11 Community United Methodist Church.
- 12 4. All relevant, current and historic records of the congregation shall be handled in consultation
13 with the Conference Commission on Archives and History.