

KUMC Discernment Planning

Board of Stewards – June 5, 2022

As the United Methodist denomination splits, we are literally standing at a crossroads intent on “Finding our Way.” Our affiliation decision process, required by the denomination and now approved by the KUMC Board of Stewards is described herein. It is how we will learn, pray, discuss and decide together how best to travel and ultimately which way is best for KUMC.

Overview (what's in this document)

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BOARD ACTIONS TAKEN

- Determined that the discernment process as presented (edited with updated terminology and additional descriptive detail) is indeed adequate and sufficient to enable KUMC to make an affiliation decision.
- Voted to approve the process and move forward (i.e. begin “mobilization” phase).
- Voted to approve a timeline leading up to a mid to late September 2022 church conference based on the following considerations:
 - Enable sufficient preparedness for the church membership to make an informed decision (BOS can adjust timing based on their assessment)
 - Reaching an affiliation decision in advance of a likely called Texas Annual Conference (TAC) session for the purpose of considering local church requests
 - Minimizing the inherent disruption and distraction of our “denominational conundrum” for the ongoing and vital work of the church

Finding our Way - Getting Started . . .

- Given the current state of disagreement, discussion and uncertainty within the United Methodist Church, it would be irresponsible for us NOT to engage in a process of spiritual discernment as to what is most God-honoring and best for KUMC.
- Before engaging in meaningful conversation and debate, all participants should learn about the issues, understand the facts and seek guidance from God through prayer.
 - Applies to our (Board of Stewards) gathering tonight and everyone going forward!
 - The goal and purpose of the process is in fact to enable the informing, learning and assimilating and prayer for all who will be entitled and desire to participate.
- The question before the Board of Stewards today (June 5th) is: **“Is the discernment process as presented appropriate and sufficient to prepare KUMC to make an affiliation decision?”**
 - And if changes/improvements are warranted, what are they?
 - And given the current environment, what timeframe is needed?

The discernment-decision journey begins with understanding the current facts and their implication for local churches

KEY ASSUMPTIONS

- “A **split** is coming and it breaks my/our heart” (Bishop Scott Jones, March 2022). And given the events of the recent past, (this split) has been described as the **“least bad way forward”**.
- The Global Methodist Church (**GMC**) **launched** on May 1st, providing an alternative connectional option for Methodist churches.
- All churches, unless they pursue independence, face making the **choice** of continuing in **a post-separation UMC (psUMC)**, explicitly or implicitly, or leaving/disaffiliating and **joining the GMC** or another evangelical denomination.
 - All indications point to the **UMC moving in a more progressive direction** (Bishop Scott Jones, March 2022) and is poised to do so post separation.
 - The **GMC** has published a transitional Book of Doctrines and Disciplines providing clarity around and the substance and polity of its **traditional direction**.
 - **While the future for each (psUMC and GMC) is not fully known, each is in fact readily “knowable”**
- **Rules for Disaffiliation** – exist under ¶2548.2 in the Book of Discipline and provide the required procedures/approvals for any church seeking to leave the denomination. During the 2019 General Conference, additional/alternative rules for disaffiliation (¶2553) were established for churches opting to leave the UMC. (**note: this could well change but doesn’t affect the process**)
- **Delaying the General Conference** until 2024 and all its implications creates uncertainty and complexity and provides the necessary reasons for local churches to **proceed proactively towards a decision**.

As a “traditional” church, there is a natural affinity with a “traditional” denomination

Discernment begins the Disaffiliation Process within the UMC

SEVEN STEPS*

While other approvals may be necessary as well, the following are the minimum requirements for the Texas Annual Conference to approve a local church disaffiliation under the current Book of Discipline:

- 1. First, members of the local church must complete an appropriate process of discernment. The determination of whether a process is appropriate is made by the church's District Superintendent.**
2. After the local church nears completion of the process of discernment, the annual conference will calculate apportionment and unfunded pension liability estimates for that local church.
- 3. The local church may vote to move forward with the disaffiliation process. To move forward, disaffiliation must be affirmed by a simple majority (§2548.2) or a two-thirds majority (§2553) of a duly called church conference.**
4. The local church must pay in full the previous year's apportionments and the current year's apportionments.
5. The local church must pay in full the unfunded pension liability, as calculated by the TAC Board of Pensions in accordance with Wespath's guidance.
 - The valuation is based on a market valuation of unfunded liability
 - The valuation takes in to account the local church's share of the liability
 - The valuation gives the local church credit for its contributions to the Conference's pension reserves with credit for earning over time.
6. The local church must complete all forms in accordance with GCFA's disaffiliation guidance.
7. After all the foregoing steps have been completed, the TAC may vote to release the local church from any obligations under the trust clause in §2503 in accordance with the then applicable Book of Discipline.

Any decision to “disaffiliate” appropriately requires the church to engage in a period and process of reflection and discernment

DRAFT PROCESS (NOW APPROVED)



Hypothetical timeline leading up to a September Church Conference

PROCESS TIMELINE (APPROVED 6/5/2022)

Preparation

- Gather Information
- Discern impact of rulings
- Develop draft Discernment plan
- Begin communication with laity

Mobilization

- BOS Approval
- Ready Website, prayer, FAQs, etc.
- Develop "Affiliation Case"
- Expand plan detail - Schedule Engagement events

Engagement

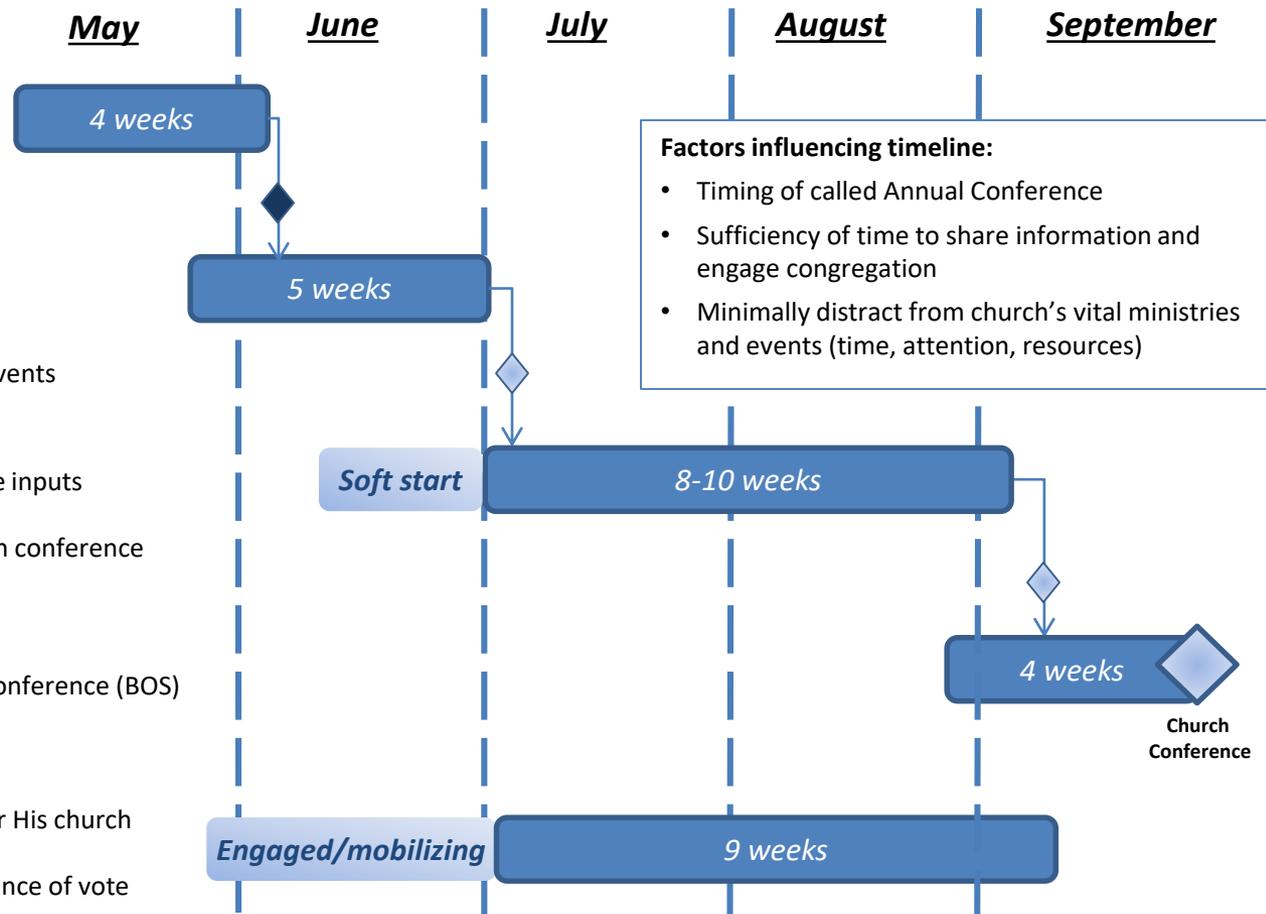
- Vet case with Leadership groups; incorporate inputs
- Conduct church-wide meetings
- Finalize case and recommendation for church conference

Decision

- Plan and announce church conference
- Develop specific motion to bring to church conference (BOS)
- Convene and Vote

Prayer

- Listening, seeking God's guidance and will for His church
- For grace and respect
- Engage church in "40-days of prayer" in advance of vote



Relying on God’s Faithfulness and Guidance . . .

2011

Clear direction of our church established: become more intentional about making (and being) Disciples

KUMC MISSION AND VISION

MISSION

Our Purpose

To **make disciples** of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world to the Glory of God

VISION

"Picture" of what we're to do

God calls upon us to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ so that people

- **Connect** to Christ and to one another
- **Grow** in Faith
- **Serve** in Love

What we are to become

DISCIPLES

- Confess Jesus Christ as Lord
- Empowered by the Holy Spirit
- Worship regularly
- Practice a vital prayer life
- Connect through small groups
- Rooted in Scripture
- Share the story of God's love in Christ
- Practice generous giving
- Serve the least, the last, the lost

2013

Built Together (Ephesians 2:21-22)



Descriptive of our Campus and our Faith Community

2016

Updated our 2011 Priorities

Review and Reset of KUMC Priorities to Guide pursuing our Mission

SUSTAIN- CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Christ Centered Worship

Service/Mission

EVOLVE/EXPAND

Families with Children & Youth

Discipleship

NEW AND/OR AUGMENT

Communications

Caring Ministries

Beyond Our Walls

2019

Statement of Beliefs & Identity

We believe all of us are created in God’s image. All of us are called to be part of God’s work in the world. Our church was created and called to love and serve everyone, and will continue to welcome everyone into a life-transforming relationship with Jesus Christ.

Specifically, we will:

- Love all people
- Live faithfully to our United Methodist Covenant
- Ground our lives in Scripture

KUMC 2022 – Relying on God, Confident we can Thrive

THE JOURNEY CONTINUES; PRACTICED AND PREPARED FOR THE FUTURE

<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022 (Vision)*</u>
<p>Resilient– tested by change and tragedy</p> <p>United –focusing on our shared mission of making disciples</p> <p>Aligned – With God’s will by prioritizing prayer</p>	<p>Season of Fruitfulness (i.e. thriving)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In place and high functioning staff• Financial health (congregational generosity)• Ministry trajectory (small groups, local missions) <p>Clear Identity and beliefs (articulated)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Love all people• Live faithfully to our United Methodist Covenant• Ground our lives in Scripture	<p>Embracing a rich heritage; <u>rooted in who we are</u></p> <p>Ministry boldness amidst potential unrest and uncertainty</p> <p>Striving to provide what “People hunger for, what’s real . . . an <u>encounter with God.</u>”</p> <p>Learning to navigate uncertain times - Reimagining ministry in a post-covid world</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Technology & communications</u> for a more digital environment• Nurture a culture of <u>agility, nimbleness & innovation</u>	<p>Season of reconnecting and renewal</p> <p>Using missions and small group connections to augment limitations in traditional worship</p> <p>God’s provision and faithfulness demonstrated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• New and vibrant (local) missions• Navigating significant pastoral changes• (Atypical) financial health/generosity	<p>“As we continue down this path of uncertainty, we celebrate (and trust) the <u>certainty of God’s faithfulness</u>”</p> <p>Prayer & Radical Renewal - In a time of doubt, even more important to be “led by (saying yes to) God”</p> <p>Expecting to thrive!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• As branches . . .• Connected to the vine• Bearing fruit <p>Celebrating the rich 50-year heritage of KUMC!</p>

* January 2022 Leadership Kickoff

Founded in Scripture, a Covenant-Keeping Wesleyan, capable of leading through difficult times . . .

SR. PASTOR PROFILE (SPRC, 2017)

For the past nine years, KUMC has been led by a pastor with wisdom, discernment, spiritual passion and a biblical theology founded in scriptural teaching and instruction. Undergoing a spiritual transformation under this leadership, the church has become outward focused on the community and the world around it, seeking to reach out in love and compassion to those in need of help, and healing. Through these outward focused missions, the church has grown in size of both members and building, as well as in its love for others. In order to continue this growth, KUMC must maintain the strong leadership of a pastor who is dedicated to these principals and to creating disciples to reach out into the world and with the love of Christ. The church believes this pastor will possess the following characteristics/profile.

Spiritual Leadership

- Biblical Teaching/Preaching Founded in Scripture
- Covenant-Keeping Wesleyan
- Strong Spiritual Leader Capable of Leading Through Difficult Times
- Spiritual Vision for the Future and the Ability to Share It
- Strong Authoritative Voice of Wisdom, Faith, and Reason
- Compassionate, Caring, and Personable
- Outward Focus on Missions and Families

Personal Leadership

- Relationship Builder
- Personable and Authentic “real-life” Individual
- Dynamic, Energetic, & Positive
- Joy and Love of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is Evident
- Loves Others

Lay Leadership

- Strong Personable Leader Capable of Leading the Congregation Through the Difficult Issues Being Experienced by the United Methodist Church
- Enables Lay Leadership
- Capable of Relating and Connecting to the Young and Old of the Church
- Plans and Clearly Articulates the Goals and Expectations of the Church
- Vision for the Future and Capable of Sharing It
- Champion for Change in Alignment with the Growth of the Congregation
- Commitment to Leading the Church According to the Established Mission, Vision, and Priorities of KUMC Through Generosity and Outreach

Administrative & Staff Leadership

- Staff Stability
- Proven Leadership (and experience)

UMC Rulings and actions taken have provided a measure of clarity . . .

RELEVANT RULINGS & EVENTS

Event	Ruling	Implication
Judicial Council	Annual Conferences cannot disaffiliate as a unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only local church disaffiliation is allowed
Judicial Council	Jurisdictional Conferences can and must meet this year to elect Bishops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite some clarity regarding retirements, the timing of TAC getting a new Bishop remains uncertain • Bishop Jones' adherence to established disaffiliation protocols are known, reasonable and preferred
Jurisdictional Conference	Will meet in November; newly elected Bishops take office Jan. 1, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likely a special called Annual Conference meeting in October for purpose of considering local church disaffiliation requests. • Drives timeline for church conference (affiliation decision) in mid to late September
Texas Annual Conference	Resolution to clarify the unfunded pension liability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizes the existing TAC pension reserves and value at time of disaffiliation • Significantly reduces a church's financial obligation if choosing to disaffiliate

Useful background information . . . Will ultimately be available and updated on the KUMC Website

RESOURCES AND LINKS

<https://www.txcumc.org/navigatingthewaters> (Texas Annual Conference website – webinars, FAQs, process information, etc.)

<https://firebrandmag.com/articles/crossing-the-rubicon-a-bishop-says-goodbye-to-the-united-methodist-church> (Bishop Lowrey resignation from the UMC – response to Council of Bishop’s raising the issue of “ultimate integrity”)

<https://globalmethodist.org/> (Global Methodist Church Website – Leadership, plans, theology)

<https://wesleyancovenant.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/A-Comprehensive-Comparison-Chart.pdf> (A Comparison Chart of United Methodist and Global Methodist Church)