

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. Is KUMC splitting or being asked to split?

- We, like many other churches, have entered a process of discernment. We are discerning whether to remain in the United Methodist Church (UMC) or to disaffiliate from UMC and join the Global Methodist Church (GMC). GMC is a newly created Methodist denomination that retains our current theology. The "split" refers to local churches that might be leaving the United Methodist Church due to the trajectory of the UMC leadership in Bishops, General Agencies, and Clergy. We urge you to read the articles and view the videos on our "Why UMC" and "Why GMC" menu options.
- KUMC is not splitting. We will stay faithful to our 50-year legacy of being a "vibrant church that offers the transforming love of Jesus to our community and world."
- We (pastors, staff, and laity) desire to remain united in 1) making and being disciples of Jesus Christ (Christ-followers); 2) boldly sharing the life-transforming Gospel; 3) serving and reaching out in love to all and 4) living faithfully to our covenants and the teaching of scripture. We want to continue sharing that there is more to life in Christ.

2. Why is the United Methodist Church (UMC) denomination splitting?

- Those choosing to remain in the UMC typically believe that the diversity of thought is a strength and that the church's theology needs to evolve with society. They recognize that bishops, clergy, and general agencies are violating the covenant but believe those actions are small and have always been a part of the UMC. They interpret the conflict and disagreements at the General Conferences as a necessary part of how we are emerging to be relevant to the world.
- Those choosing to move to the Global Methodist Church typically believe that the current theology of the church should not be diminished, clergy and bishops should uphold the established theology of the church, and that the reorganization in the GMC reduces the financial burden for the bureaucracy of the general church. It creates a culture of joyful obedience to covenants, focuses on the local church, and enhances the role of the laity. They believe that the dysfunction of the General Conference reflects a failure of leadership, an incompetent system, and an unrepairable(irreparable) brokenness in the church's institutional structure.

3. How does each affiliation group view the Bible?

- Those who advocate remaining in the UMC believe in the authority of scripture but interpret it differently, especially in matters of human sexuality.
- Those who advocate the GMC believe that all scripture is inspired by God (2 Tim. 3:16). The Holy Spirit works through tradition, reason, and experience to assist us in

understanding how the Bible guides our lives as the word of God for the people of God.

4. How will the congregation get to vote regarding their denominational affiliation choice?

- The vote will be on Sunday, September 25th, at a called Church Conference according to the rules in the Book of Discipline. Only members can vote, must be there in person, will pre-register to verify membership, and receive paper ballots on which to cast a vote. There will be no speeches or presentations at the vote. We will gather to pray and vote.
- Our District Superintendent presides, and we will receive additional details as we get closer to the date. While still in question, we assume we will need a 2/3+1 majority to apply to disaffiliate. The vote will be counted and announced at the called Church Conference.

5. What is the "discernment process," and why is it important?

- The Discernment Process was initiated in May following the rules of the Texas Annual Conference. It has included many small group and personal conversations and three town hall-type meetings. We will continue with a church-wide, intentional prayer emphasis (i.e., 40 days of prayer and fasting preceding the September 25th vote) and more meetings for information sharing and discussion before making an affiliation decision. It would be irresponsible to ask people merely for an opinion without "discernment."

6. Given the emphasis on "human sexuality," what are the different perspectives?

- Those advocating to join the GMC want to affirm our Church's current teaching that sexuality is only properly expressed through celibacy in singleness or monogamy in marriage between one man and one woman. God's love is unconditionally available to all people; this is not about whether God loves a person. This is about whether the church redefines our current teaching and blesses a broader range of sexuality. The issue of homosexuality is one part of the discussion around a theology of the body and how the church affirms the stewardship of one's sexuality. The issues of stewarding sexuality are inseparable from the issues of gender identity, bisexuality, transgenderism, queer/questioning, inquiring/intersex, asexual/ally, "+." The church is in tension with many in the culture around the issues of human sexuality, so the question might be asked, "Should the Church change our theology of sexuality to reflect the culture?" Those advocating GMC believe that Scriptures about human sexuality are not culturally bound but reveal God's transcendent design of human sexuality throughout different cultures.

- Those who advocate staying in the UMC typically believe that the Scriptures on human sexuality are culturally bound and do not apply today. How this approach is applied can be heard by viewing the webinars on the "Stay UMC" tab. Essentially, all references to homosexuality do not apply today. The references in the Old Testament are part of a Levitical code that isn't followed. The mentions in the New Testament by Paul do not apply because Paul and the first-century authors did not know what we know today about human sexual identity. There are also those who want to stay UMC who do not believe our difference on human sexuality should divide us. We can exist as one Church under a big tent while having different theologies of human sexuality.

7. What is the "Trust Clause," and why is it such a prominent issue? If we leave, what happens to our church property?

- Keeping it simple, the Conference has a limited ownership position via the "trust clause" in our church property – it is not ours to do with as we like. To leave the denomination with our property, we need to be released from the "trust clause." The disaffiliation steps administered by the Conference Trustees accomplish this.
- Once released, the property is entirely ours – we own it. The Global Methodist church does not require a trust clause.

8. If we disaffiliate and leave the UMC, what will happen to the relationships with the agencies, historic institutions, and ministries we support and work with (Methodist Children's Home, Methodist Retirement Home, UMARMY, UMCOR, Emmaus, Kairos, etc.)?

- Most of these relationships are initiated by and supported through the local church, so they would not change. Specifically: UMARMY, Methodist Children's Home, and all local missions such as Oaks of Righteousness, Mission Northeast, and of course, our own Society of St. Stephens would not change.
- The relationship with the Methodist Retirement Home (and UMCOR) is somewhat different and could be affected, but we can still give to them.

9. What is the cost - financial impact of changing (or not changing)?

- If KUMC voted to leave the UMC, we would be required to pay our portion of any unfunded clergy pension liability to the UMC and be current on paying our Apportionments (funds the denomination and agencies) to the conference for 2021-22. Our under-payment for this period is/will be \$226K, and the current estimate of unfunded pension liability is \$18K and is likely to go down before the end of the year. Other costs for legal and rebranding are estimated at \$10K for a total of \$254K.
- Our annual Apportionment obligation to the UMC has averaged \$250K in the past several years. (We have underpaid these amounts with the Bishop's tolerance since

2015.). The GMC labels this "connectional funding." From January 1st to the Convening Conference of the GMC will be roughly \$75K. Formulas in the GMC and UMC are similar, but the GMC will have reduced overhead because it will have fewer general agencies and locate pension/health in one office for all clergy in the United States.

10. What happens to our buildings, assets, and debt if we choose to disaffiliate and join the GMC?

- If the church votes to leave the UMC, we do not leave the buildings or assets; we will have to change the name on related legal documentation and remove the cross and flame from our use. We have also confirmed with the Texas Methodist Foundation that this would not impact our debt agreement either. After completing the agreement with the Texas Annual Conference, we would also be released from the Trust Clause on our property.

11. If leaving the UMC, are there other options that should be considered (i.e., Independent, Free Methodist)?

- Theoretically, "Yes"; practically "No." We are a connectional church, so we should stay connected – not independent. The GMC is the most realistic and desirable option as determined by our Board of Stewards. Because there is no trust clause, it would not be a complicated process or cost should our church choose a different denomination affiliation in the future.

12. How does a change in denomination affiliation affect our "appointed clergy?"

- The Bishop appoints pastors according to the Bishop's assessment of what is in the best interest of the larger church, the pastor, and in some cases, the local church. Local pastors (Stacey and Clint) operate under a slightly different model and are endorsed yearly by the local church and district. If we move GMC, all of our current pastors will continue to serve if they desire to become GMC pastors.
- Because Bishop Jones retires on December 31st, 2022, our church will have a new Bishop on January 1st, 2023, regardless of affiliation. Who our pastors will be is ultimately the decision of the Bishop. The Bishop's judgment and preferences will be what most affect clergy appointments.