

## WHY KUMC SHOULD DISSAFFILIATE FROM UMC AND JOIN GMC

From KUMC Laity Advocating for "Go GMC"

As we near the 50-year anniversary of KUMC, we reflect on our journey of discovering who and whose we are in God – being obedient to Him as He has equipped us to be a thriving church! We believe the United Methodist Church (UMC) is changing and is no longer the denomination KUMC was founded on. If we (Kingwood United Methodist Church members) want our church to continue God's Kingdom work and be a light in the community, then we need to leave the UMC and affiliate with a different denomination now. Yes, to "stay the same", we need to "leave."

The Global Methodist Church (GMC) is the best and most obvious choice for us because; it mirrors our current theological doctrines and teachings; and, shifts the focus to empowering and helping the local church. It is endorsed by our clergy, is the recommended alternative affiliation of our Board of Stewards, and is being led by many prominent and trusted traditional current and former UMC clergy and laity.

Four reasons we believe this change is best for the future of our church:

### **1) Trajectories of UMC and GMC are on unreconcilably different paths**

- Conservatives and progressives in the UMC have been unable to achieve meaningful resolution on key disputes for many years.
- KUMC is no longer able to rise above and distance itself from the UMC denominational disagreement and dysfunction.
- There are many examples of progressive clergy, bishops and Boards of Ordained Ministry who have openly stated they will not follow UMC teachings and laws.
- Our Church does not align with nor accept these acts of disobedience. We expect and trust our clergy to keep their vows of ordination and lead our church accordingly.

The UMC has been moving in a more liberal/progressive direction for decades. This direction can be seen in the open acts of disobedience to the Book of Discipline (church beliefs and laws) and willful rejection of the rulings of the Judicial Council (the UMC's Supreme Court) by Bishops in the UMC.

We believe the UMC has left us by adopting a more progressive stance on many theological issues and moving us away from traditional Wesleyan Doctrine. We do not believe the UMC can be or is a "big tent", where there is a legitimate place for all views to coexist because those views include radical differences in how scripture is interpreted, accompanied by frequently expressed contempt for those holding traditional views.

Examples of disobedience include:

- The leadership of an entire jurisdiction (the North Central Jurisdiction, 1 of 5 US geographic areas in the US) is openly defying church laws and refusing to hold disobedient clergy accountable.
- Karen Oliveto was consecrated as a bishop in the Western Jurisdiction in 2016. The Judicial Council ruled that Bishop Oliveto's election was in violation of the Book of Discipline, but she remains an active bishop in the Mountain Sky Conference in the Western Jurisdiction. Oliveto is a "self-avowed practicing homosexual" and our Book of Discipline does not permit such persons to be ordained.
- Across the US, numerous bishops and conferences are permitting the teaching by seminary professors, clergy and bishops that deny the full divinity of Jesus, question the authority of scripture and even suggest that the Bible is a myth.

## **2) The GMC believes in an orthodox theology that stands on scriptural authority**

- We believe aligning with the GMC will allow KUMC to keep embracing the true and transformative message of scripture rather than allowing culture to determine truth.
- The GMC fully supports 2 Timothy 3:16 (NIV), which clearly states that **“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.”**
- There is a difference between affirming orthodox doctrines on paper and living the orthodoxy.

Given the reality of past efforts and fewer traditional voices, we believe that the 2024 General Conference (UMC’s law making gathering) we believe it is highly likely to change the Book of Discipline - the traditional orthodox Christian belief that marriage is between one man and one woman and the guidance on how one stewards and lives their sexuality will be removed.

The GMC rejects Adam Hamilton’s approach of compartmentalizing the Bible into three buckets. In two buckets, this well-known UMC pastor places portions of scripture he says should never have been in the Bible and portions of scripture he says are no longer God’s word for today. According to Hamilton, only one part of scripture is the timeless truth of God.

While many profess belief in and allegiance to the UMC’s “Articles of Religion and Confession of Faith” and rest on the notion that these are “intended to be eternal and almost impossible to change”, the UMC “big tent” allows preaching, teaching and views that include the rejection of the divinity of Jesus, the resurrection and the nature of sin.

## **3) The GMC better aligns with KUMC because it focuses on the local church and creates a culture of accountability for all clergy and bishops.**

GMC Offers:

- Greater accountability for bishops by limiting terms of service and making bishops accountable to a committee of laity and clergy;
- A leaner and simpler denominational structure with less bureaucracy and lower costs;
- A simpler, more accessible ordination system that retains educational standards;
- No trust clause;
- An emphasis on the local church as the front line of mission and ministry; and
- No obstacles should a church choose to disaffiliate in the future.

We believe the GMC is a better value proposition for our church because the bureaucracy beyond the local church is smaller and will be less expensive. This will allow more of our resources to be devoted to mission and ministry work at the local church level.

The GMC provides accountability for bishops and clergy which is currently missing in the UMC. A committee of laity and clergy will hold bishops and clergy accountable to orthodox Christian beliefs. The GMC is supported by a small fixed percentage of local church net receipts. This will result in a 70% decrease in denominational support. Finally, the trust clause will be eliminated giving local churches free and clear ownership and use of their land and buildings.

In the interest of continuing as the church we all love here at Kingwood Methodist, we need to affiliate with a denomination that best matches our overall values and allows for local autonomy and authority to further God’s kingdom in our community. The GMC will allow us to continue to spend our time and energy on mission and ministry with the church family we have come to love and cherish over the past 50 years.

#### **4) Disaffiliation exit ramp has deadlines**

- The option to leave has a functional deadline of Spring 2023
- Options will be limited and onerous going forward
- Traditional churches we align with are already leaving

Because the path to disaffiliate from the UMC expires at the end of 2023, and because it requires the vote of our Annual Conference (geographic area supervised by a bishop) either in December 2022 or May 2023, we have a limited window of time to act.

Our current traditional bishop supports allowing congregations gracious exit from the UMC. However, he is retiring at the end of 2022, and a new more progressive bishop will be assigned to our geographic area as of January 1, 2023. We believe the time to act is now.

We believe the GMC is offering a structure that will support our local efforts; give us space to continue mission and ministry; and allow us to address and heal any differences we may have. We believe the UMC wants to make changes that will further divide us and cause many faithful members to leave our church.

#### **Our conclusion**

If we want to continue to be a vibrant, Wesleyan, Methodist church, we need to leave the UMC and affiliate with the GMC now. It is our best option to preserve the unity of our local church, retain our traditional theology and get refreshed and refocused on the work of Jesus Christ.

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