

Hey Church, I wanted to explain my heart and my passions for why I am EXCITED to become a Global Methodist Church pastor and why I think KUMC would thrive as a GMC church.

### **Reclaiming what it means to be a Methodist**

My favorite class at Asbury was my Theology of John Wesley class. This was the first time I really dug in and read Wesley's writings and theology. John Wesley was spoken about all my life, but I didn't read much of him. In that class, it was as if I was reading the sheet music for the song of my faith. My heart was set on fire for this expression of the gospel and the richness of our Methodist tradition. In the midst of my excitement, there was also deep sorrow, because the UMC that I knew and loved had lost the richness of our theology. A theology that says Jesus can set you free from the bondages of sin. Because of the cross of Christ, sin doesn't have to reign over your life. A theology that says you can be made perfect in this life by the radical transformational grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. A theology that says God wants to sanctify all of your life to become more like Jesus. A theology that says caring about the poor, outcast, and oppressed is essential in becoming more like Jesus.

A common saying that I hear from people across different UMC churches is, "I love being a United Methodist, I can believe whatever I want to believe." If that is what our denomination is known for, then our doctrine has been lost along the way. Jesus calls us to a way of living and believing. The call of Christ is to come as you are, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

The GMC is a church that says we will not hide our theology under a bushel, because this is the theology of a revival. A mighty movement of God that swept over England, then to America. The spark of that revival has been lost as we have lost who we are. In the GMC, we will be a church that is unashamed of our theology and says let us be truly Methodist again. Let us be bold about the importance of small groups. Pursue holiness. Radically love our neighbor in sacrificial ways. Proclaim that King Jesus has come, repent and believe the gospel.

### **Emphasis on church planting**

I was listening to a webinar with a leader in the GMC, Jessica LaGrone, she said, "the GMC leadership wants to plant 3500 churches over the next 7 years." What would it look like for us as at Kingwood to be a part of that? What if we were sponsoring church plants in downtown Houston, Seattle, and all the way across the globe in the Philippines to reach the lost for Jesus? There is this famous story of when John Wesley first started field preaching. George Whitfield took John to a coal mining town because the coal miners wouldn't step foot inside the church. John started preaching out in the open to these coal miners and they all slowly came out of their houses. As Wesley told them the hope of the gospel he noticed white lines running down their grimy faces as the tears from hearing the gospel for the first time pierced their hearts. Because of his love for Jesus, John went and planted these Methodist societies for those who were far from the Lord.

I believe the GMC will be a denomination that plants churches with the coal miners, to go to those that don't know Jesus, regardless of their financial status. It will be a denomination that cares about those who are far from Jesus. A church that captures the spirit of John Wesley, if the lost won't come to the church, then the church will go to them. A denomination that goes where the Spirit is moving. A church that doesn't emphasize building the largest building we can, but emphasizes multiplying the kingdom impact in our surrounding community. This church can be a catalyst in the Kingdom of God for new church starts in the GMC. What an exciting missional opportunity right at our feet waiting to be grasped.

### **Concluding thoughts**

As someone who is a traditional, theologically charismatic pastor, I do not believe that there will be a place for people like me in the UMC in the future. By the grace of God, I hopefully have 40 more years of pastoral ministry ahead of me. Will traditional people like me be welcomed in the UMC for the next few years? Probably. But what about 15 or 30 years from now?

The traditionalist plan, which reaffirmed our church's current theology, was put forth for General Conference in 2019. When speaking on the floor of General Conference, a prominent UMC pastor said this about the traditionalist plan: "This plan will introduce a virus into the American church that will make it very sick, very quickly." This does not sound like a Church that will welcome traditionalists in the "Big Tent," where our theology is akin to a virus. This same pastor is now a candidate for bishop and expected to be elected later this year. As the UMC goes through this transition, I believe it best for this church to leave the UMC to join the GMC. I am leaving the UMC with a heavy heart, but I am hopeful in joining the GMC.

There are so many other things I'm excited about in the GMC, too many to include here. If you want to know more, I would love to tell you about it. I believe there is about to be a mighty movement of God for the people called Methodists. I see glimpses of it when I go to the New Room Conference, I saw glimpses of it when I was at seminary at Asbury, I saw a glimpse of it at the founding of the Wesleyan Covenant Association 5 years ago, and I see glimpses of it here in Kingwood.

Jesus has done so much for me. He rescued me from pits I never thought I could escape. He healed my anxiety, something I thought only death could fix. He called me to give my life in service to His church. I will gladly give my life to my God and King, but I cannot do it in the UMC going forward. To be faithful to the one who has been faithful to me, I must follow Him into the GMC. Friends, I hope that you'll follow me into the GMC as well. I am excited about the future God has for the GMC and I want this community of faith to be a part of that, in the words of the prophet Isaiah 43:18-19, "Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it

springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.”

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