

FAQ FOR CUMC REGARDING

WITHDRAWAL FROM UNITED METHODIST CHURCH AND ALTERNATIVES IN EVENT OF WITHDRAWAL

FAQ addressing withdrawal from the UMC:

1. When and how will Christ United Methodist Church ("Christ Church") determine whether or not to withdraw or "disaffiliate" from the United Methodist Church ("UMC")?

ANSWER: A congregational meeting has been scheduled for Sunday, October 30, 2022 (subject to approval by the UMC District Office) for a vote on a resolution to withdraw and separate from the UMC ("Disaffiliation"). For the resolution to pass it must receive an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the professing members of Christ Church in attendance at that meeting.

2. What is the process, terms and likely timeline by which Disaffiliation (withdrawal) by Christ Church may occur under Sec. 2553 of the UMC Book of Discipline?

ANSWER: Disaffiliation from the UMC under Sec. 2553 of the UMC Book of Discipline is achieved upon satisfying each of the following conditions:

- a. A two-thirds affirmative vote by the congregation to Disaffiliate from the UMC
- b. Agreement to pay two years of apportionments
- c. Agreement to pay Christ Church's share of the Tennessee Western Kentucky Annual Conference's unfunded pension liabilities
- d. A majority vote of the Annual Conference.

The next scheduled Annual Conference is in June, 2023, so while items (a) through (c) may be accomplished prior to that time, under the existing schedule, this process may not be completed until June of 2023. The right of a UM church to Disaffiliate under Sec. 2553 expires on December 31, 2023.

3. What would it cost Christ Church to disaffiliate from the United Methodist Church?

ANSWER: If Christ Church were exiting the denomination prior to 2019 or after 2023 with its land and buildings, it would cost up to, or more than, \$15 million; which is the latest appraised value of the land and buildings of Christ Church. The United Methodist Book of Discipline states that local United Methodist churches do not own their own land and buildings. Land and buildings are owned by the denomination in trust. Therefore, if an exit from the denomination were negotiated, the local church would potentially be liable for the entire amount of the value of property and buildings.

At the 2019 called General Conference, a temporary provision (The provision expires at the end of 2023) was created for a local United Methodist Churches to disaffiliate from the denomination. Known as [Paragraph 2553](#) in the Book of Discipline, Christ Church would be able to exit the denomination by paying the Annual Conference approximately \$3.5 million. Upon disaffiliation, Christ Church would own her own building and land.

Of the \$3.5 million, approximately \$1.4 million of it is made up of apportionments Christ Church would owe the United Methodist Church for 2022 and 2023. The remaining balance of approximately \$2 million covers our fair share of unfunded pension liability for retired clergy at an open market rate. While these expenditures would normally be owed to the Annual Conference over time, they would simply be paid up front at the time of disaffiliation.

After careful study and analyses, the Executive Committee of Christ Church's Council believes this is an opportunity of which we need to take advantage and is working on a plan as to how that financial obligation can be met without having an adverse impact on the ministries and programs of Christ Church.

We are committed to remaining Methodist Christians. Many of you may have been a part of previous iterations of Methodism in your lifetime. For those of you in your 80s and above, you may have been a part of the Methodist Episcopal Church. For those of you in your 50s and above, you may remember being a part of The Methodist Church before transitioning to the new iteration known as The United Methodist Church. If we vote in favor of disaffiliation and become a part of another group such as Global Methodist Church in the future, we will continue to be Methodist Christians in the rich theological tradition of John and Charles Wesley.

4. Why must Christ Church comply with the Disaffiliation process in order to leave the UMC with its property and assets?

ANSWER: The "Trust Clause" of the Book of Discipline (Sec. 2501) provides that all property of a local UM church (including real estate) is held "in trust" for the benefit of the UMC through the applicable Annual Conference; consequently, if Christ Church withdraws from the UMC without approval of the Annual Conference, it is the UMC's position that ownership and control of church property remains with the Annual Conference. Under the Disaffiliation process, the Annual Conference and the UMC shall release all claims to the property of Christ Church.

5. Are there options under the Book of Discipline for Christ Church to withdraw from the UMC other than through the Disaffiliation procedure under Sec. 2553?

ANSWER: There are conceivably other options available for a local church to withdraw from the UMC, including entering into a Comity Agreement under Sec. 2548.2 of the Book of Discipline; however, it has been determined by our bishop that the only option available for a church in the Tennessee Western Kentucky Annual Conference to Disaffiliate is under Sec. 2553 of the Book of Discipline.

6. From what sources of funds will Christ Church draw to pay the amount required to disaffiliate under Sec. 2553?

ANSWER: This has yet to be finalized by the leadership of Christ Church but possible sources of funding to comply with the Disaffiliation requirements could be a combination of one or more of the following sources: (a) cash on hand, (b) unrestricted funds, (c) restricted funds where such use complies with any restrictions, (d) a bank loan and/or (e) special offerings by Christ Church Members who may choose to assist in meeting this specific financial commitment.

7. What is the status of the *Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace through Separation* (the “Protocol”) and does it remain a viable option for withdrawing from the UMC?

ANSWER: Upon the postponement of the UMC General Conference until 2024 it was believed by many that the Protocol could still be adopted at that time; however, at this time the prevailing thought among those who track these developments is that it is extremely unlikely that the passage of the Protocol at the 2024 General Conference is a viable option because, among other reasons: (a) With the significant number of traditionalist churches currently leaving the UMC and those additional churches expected to leave the UMC next year through Disaffiliation, it is unlikely that there will be sufficient support for the Protocol at General Conference to be approved and (b) many progressives and centrist leaders who were supportive of the Protocol in the past (including signatories to the Protocol document) have recently withdrawn their support.

8. In the event Christ Church votes for Disaffiliation and withdraws from the UMC, what are the “next steps” or possible alternatives for Christ Church, as an institution, to faithfully serve the Kingdom of God in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

ANSWER: In light of the monumental importance of this decision for the future of Christ Church, the Executive Committee has established a Task Force to engage in a short term study of this issue and bring a recommendation to the congregation relating to the future structure and polity of Christ Church, including, but not limited to, consideration of remaining an independent church, joining the Global Methodist Church, joining the Free Methodist Church or another alternative.

NOTE: If Christ Church disaffiliates from the UMC, it does not necessarily follow that Christ Church will join the Global Methodist Church (“GMC”) (see Answer 8, above). That is a decision to be made by the congregation at the appropriate time; however, the GMC was “birthed” by the Wesleyan Covenant Association, of which CUMC was a founding member and has been very supportive of its positions and actions since its formation in 2016. Discussions at Christ Church relating to withdrawal from the UMC has generally been accompanied with information and discussions relating to the new, traditionalist denomination referenced in the Protocol and which was expected to be launched upon the passage of the Protocol, or earlier if the Protocol failed to be adopted. That new, traditionalist denomination is the GMC and as such, it was deemed appropriate to include FAQ relating to the GMC for the members of Christ Church to be better informed about this new Methodist denomination.

FAQ addressing joining the GMC:

9. What is the Global Methodist Church and will Christ Church join that denomination if it withdraws from the UMC?

ANSWER: GMC is a newly formed (launched May 1, 2022) traditionalist Methodist denomination in the Wesleyan tradition that has been the subject of extensive planning, efforts and work over the past two years. The Mission of the GMC is “to make disciples of Jesus Christ who worship passionately, love extravagantly, and witness boldly”; its Vision is “to join God in a journey of bringing new life, reconciliation, and the presence of Christ to all people and to helping each person to increasingly reflect the character of Christ”. Assuming Christ Church votes to Disaffiliate from the UMC, the church will take a second congregational vote to determine its future path. For Christ Church to join the Global Methodist Church or another denomination, a resolution before a congregational meeting must receive an affirmative vote of at least one-half plus one of the professing members of Christ Church in attendance at that meeting.

10. What is the current status of the GMC and are churches currently joining that new traditionalist Wesleyan denomination?

ANSWER: Since its launch on May 1, 2022, hundreds of UMC churches across this country and internationally have withdrawn from the UMC (sixty UMC churches in our Annual Conference were approved for Disaffiliation in June of 2022), many of whom are expected to join the GMC and it is further expected that many more churches are satisfying (or attempting to satisfy) the requirements of Disaffiliation from the UMC and are planning to join the GMC.

11. What is the timing, process and initial cost for a church to join the GMC?

ANSWER: In that the GMC was formally launched on May 1, 2022, any United Methodist Church that has successfully withdrawn from the UMC (and any independent church that qualifies) may immediately join the GMC through the filing of an application. There is no deadline by which churches must join the GMC. There are no fees to be paid to the GMC as part of the process of becoming a member congregation of the GMC.

12. What is the current leadership structure of the GMC?

ANSWER: The GMC is currently governed by a sixteen member Transitional Leadership Council (“TLC”) in accordance with the *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline of the Global Methodist Church* which may be reviewed on the website of the GMC at www.globalmethodist.org. The TLC shall act as the governing body of the GMC during this transition period. Within one or two years, there will be a Convening Conference of the GMC with delegates representing Annual Conferences and member churches from within the United States and from international congregations that will formally adopt the initial *Book of Doctrines and Discipline of the Global Methodist Church*.

13. If Christ Church withdraws from the UMC and joins the GMC, will the current ordained clergy at Christ Church be able to continue to serve Christ Church in the new denomination without a change in salary and benefits?

ANSWER: If a clergyperson transfers his or her ordination credentials from the UMC to the GMC, and if both the congregation and the clergyperson desire to continue in relationship, the appointment will remain in place with no change in the clergyperson’s compensation package since clergy compensation falls within the purview of the local church. Westpath, the retirement benefits administrator for the UMC, has agreed to administer the GMC’s retirement and pension program.

14. Will Christ Church own all of its property as a member of the GMC?

ANSWER: Yes, Christ Church will own all of its property as a member of the GMC. There will be no "Trust Clause" in the GMC.

15. What are some of the differences between the UMC and GMC?

ANSWER: Among other things, the vision for the GMC supports more local control (e.g. more consultation with the local church on clergy appointment), less denominational bureaucracy and substantially less contributions to the general church finances as indicated below:

	<u>GMC</u>	<u>UMC</u>
Trust Clause	No	Yes
Bishops	Term Limits	No Term Limits
Clergy	No Guaranteed Appointments	Guaranteed Appointments
Apportionments	From local budget, 1% for General Conference and 1% for local Annual Conference	From local budget, by formula, generally 7% to 15%

(See additional chart on Christ Church website for extensive comparison)

In addition, there are significant differences over the understanding, interpretation and authority of scripture and serious disagreement over several major Christian doctrines. For example, Rev. Chris Ritter, a well-respected theologian, writer and UM Pastor from Illinois cites the case of a United Methodist bishop publicly denying the virgin birth and bodily resurrection of Jesus. (SEE NOTE AT END OF DOCUMENT FOR ADDITIONAL COMMENT)

16. What will be the foundational theological doctrines of the GMC?

ANSWER: The theological doctrines of the GMC are grounded in the classical and orthodox Christian teachings as contained in The Apostles' Creed, Nicene Creed (A.D. 381) and The Definition of Chalcedon (A.D. 451) and as further established on the confession of Jesus as Messiah, the unique Son of God and resurrected Lord of heaven and earth and our Savior. The GMC asserts the primacy of scripture as the sufficient rule both for faith and practice against which all other authorities must be measured, the necessity of grace and faith and the priesthood of all believers. The GMC shall also adopt as part of its theological task, the historical Articles of Religion of the Methodist Church and the Confession of Faith of the Evangelical United Brethren Church, as well as the major works of John Wesley.

17. Will there be greater accountability upon clergy and bishops to the scriptures and the foundational theological doctrines of the GMC?

ANSWER: The GMC sets out clear doctrinal boundaries, and just as important, a commitment to hold one another accountable to maintain and teach the doctrines to which, we, as the church, subscribe. There will be a global committee comprised of clergy and laity who reflect

the racial, ethnic, geographic and gender diversity of the GMC to investigate complaints against clergy, including bishops.

18. What is the position of the GMC as it relates to members of the LGBTQ+ community and others who may be the subject of discrimination?

ANSWER: The position of the UMC that “All persons are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God” is affirmed by the GMC. Expanding on this statement, the GMC believes that all persons, irrespective of their station or circumstances in life, have been made in the image of God and must be treated with dignity, justice, and respect. The GMC denounces as sin racism, sexism, and other expressions that unjustly discriminate against any person. While the GMC affirms the orthodox, biblical view of sexuality and gender, it also welcomes all persons to the redemptive grace of Jesus and is committed to being a place of refuge and community for all who experience brokenness in that we all are in need of God’s grace.

19. What is the position of the GMC on same-sex marriage and ordination of members of the LGBTQ+ community?

ANSWER: Human sexuality is a gift of God that is to be affirmed as it is exercised within the legal and spiritual covenant of a loving and monogamous marriage between one man and one woman. The GMC will not allow or condone its clergy to perform same-sex marriage ceremonies. The GMC will not accept for ordination non-celibate homosexual or transgender bishops and clergy.

20. Will the GMC be truly Global?

ANSWER: Yes. In addition to churches in the U.S., it is anticipated there will be member churches joining the GMC from Eastern Europe, the Philippines and Africa. In addition, former UMC conferences in Latin America have indicated an interest in joining the GMC. The global nature of this denomination is reflected in the current leadership of the GMC and this will continue to be the case in the future.

SEE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON WEBSITES OF CHRIST CHURCH AND GLOBAL METHODIST CHURCH

Church members are encouraged to read the book written by Rob Renfro, *Are We Really Better Together?* available at no cost at Christ Church’s Information Desk

NOTE - CONTINUATION OF ANSWER TO FAQ 15:

Rev. Rob Refroe, referenced above and President of Good News Ministry, writes the following in a recent article from Good News Magazine with respect to his speaking at UM churches about the problems dividing the UMC:

“Then I describe to them (UM members) the deeper issues that divide the UM Church. I tell them we are divided about the Bible. Over the years, there have been UM pastors who’ve made statements about how the Bible cannot be trusted to tell us God’s will and how they scoff at those of us who believe the Scriptures are the inspired word of God. I recount our differences about the work of the Holy Spirit and how many UM pastors have told me *the Spirit is revealing new truths that contradict and override what the Bible teaches (emphasis added)*.

I tell them about my conversation with a highly respected tall-steeple pastor who told me, 'Rob, the Church created the Bible. So, we can re-create the Bible.' I tell them that worst of all we are divided on Jesus. Some of us believe Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life for all humankind. But we have a bishop who has warned us not to make an idol (a false God) out of Jesus. We have a UM seminary professor who told me, 'God is wholesale; Jesus is retail,' meaning Jesus is just one of many religious teachers, not really different from Mohammad or Buddha. We had a UM seminary president who said if you feel a need to tell persons of other religions about Jesus, you don't understand Jesus.

These are hard things to believe if you have been in your local church with a pastor who is faithful to the Scriptures, where you repeat the historic creeds and mean them, and where you pray for your nonbelieving neighbors to come to faith in Jesus. These are hard things to believe but they are true."