



OUR PURPOSE

To provide information and conversation among clergy and laity who want to **work together for the future of the United Methodist Church**—holding together various backgrounds and theological positions to offer the strongest possible witness to the love of Jesus Christ.

OUR STORY

That We May Be One (TWMBO) began in 2016 with a calling to bring United Methodist Christians within the Texas Annual Conference to one table to learn from one another.

Polarization is seeping into every part of our life, and we believe when that enters into the body of Christ, it's deeply troubling and deeply un-Methodist.

John Wesley is famous for saying that regardless of differences in opinions, **“If your heart is as my heart, then give me your hand.”**

There's no human whose experience and perspective was as different from the rest of humanity as Jesus Christ. And yet, he bridged the divide, entered into our experience, and brought the human life into connection with the divine life.

We seek to mirror this witness in our own lives. We desire to keep one another close, even in our differences of perspective and calling. Jesus' prayer the night before he died (John 17) is a critical biblical teaching: our unity as the body of Christ will be a channel of blessing in the world and cause non-believers to come to know Christ.



The world needs the **compassion of Christ** maybe now more than ever...

Instead of a “ministry of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:18), we have shown the world a ministry of estrangement as the only way to deal with each other.

That We May Be One
twmbo.org

We see divisions within the church as hurting the witness of the biblical unity of the church that Jesus asked for and expected from us. This is why **we are deeply committed to being a church that is diverse in thought and united in mission.**

[Jesus prayed] **“And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one...”**

I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” JOHN 17:11, 20-21

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Do we have to decide which denomination our church will belong to in the next three months?

A: No, nothing has to be decided now. There is some concern because ¶2553 on disaffiliation, expires at the end of 2023, but the General Conference will meet in 2024 and will re-establish methods for disaffiliation.

Q: Will the UMC become more progressive?

A: Nothing has changed in the UMC in the past few months and cannot change until 2024, at the earliest. Also, the General Conference of the UMC will remain a diverse decision-making body with many perspectives—traditionalist, centrist, and progressive—influencing any changes.

Q: Is the Global Methodist Church established?

A: Yes and no. The GMC officially founded as an organization on May 1, 2022 but currently has no churches. At the moment, they are operating under provisional rules, and their official Book of Doctrines and Discipline will not be in place for another 12–18 months, when they have their convening conference.

Q: If we join the GMC, will we have a pastor?

A: The GMC has stated that for the first 18 months, you would continue to have the same pastor you have now. After that, things are unknown as they have not finalized their appointment process, but given that they are ending guaranteed appointment, how small churches receive pastors is currently up in the air.

Q: What is different between the Global Methodist Church and the United Methodist Church as we know it today?

A: Both churches currently have the same understanding of Christian marriage. The GMC and UMC differ on some key Wesleyan theology, particularly around grace. The UMC sees itself deliberately as a “big tent” where diversity is valued, whereas the GMC places a higher value on doctrinal conformity with greater enforcement mechanisms around doctrine, denominational rules, and the payment of apportionments.

Q: Who will belong to the Texas Annual Conference in 2023?

A: The Texas Annual Conference and the broader United Methodist Church will remain home to traditionalists, centrists, and progressives. All of these perspectives will be at the table together in 2023 at our Annual Conference and in 2024 at the General Conference.

Q: Is the Global Methodist Church the only denomination you can affiliate with if you disaffiliate from the UMC?

A: No. Former United Methodist churches have disaffiliated to join the Free Methodist Church or the United Church of Christ. Others have gone independent. For our African American churches, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church—Zion, and the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church remain historic and vibrant expression of Wesleyan Christianity.

Q: Are the Central Conferences of Africa joining the GMC?

A: While not all Central Conferences have made a decision, many have publicly stated that they will remain with the UMC at least until the 2024 General Conference.

Q: In the midst of conflict are there still ministries in the UMC that are building the kingdom of God?

A: Together as United Methodists, we have fought malaria, sent missionaries around the world, worked to rebuild communities after natural disasters, founded and maintained universities, hospital systems and children’s homes, and made disciples for the transformation of the world. That work is ongoing and has not stopped—no matter what other conflicts or conversations have been going on.

Why the rush to disaffiliate churches from the Texas Annual Conference (TAC)?

You may have heard...

If you are progressive, remain UMC.
If you are traditionalist, join the GMC.

You should know...

The UMC will continue to be a denomination with traditionalists, centrists, and progressives. The UMC's position on human sexuality remains under the traditionalist plan passed at General Conference 2019 and cannot be modified until GC 2024. Even then, it is unclear what our policies will allow. The diversity of theological perspective remains a thriving aspect of our life together as United Methodists.

You may have heard...

The UMC will abandon its doctrine.

You should know...

Our Articles of Religion and our Doctrinal Standards that have been in place since Methodism began will remain unchanged in the United Methodist Church. The UMC can never revoke or alter its Articles of Religion or Confession of Faith. You can find these in the Book of Discipline, along with our Doctrinal History and Standards, in paragraphs 102-105. If anyone infers that these aspects of our church will change, they are incorrect.

You may have heard...

It will be easier for churches in our conference to disaffiliate before Bishop Jones retires.

You should know...

TAC disaffiliation policy is set by the conference's Board of Trustees, not by the bishop. A new bishop would not have the unilateral ability to change the terms of disaffiliation.

You may have heard...

This will settle it. Churches are weary of uncertainty and ready to move on.

You should know...

Some amount of uncertainty and waiting will be inevitable as the Global Methodist Church (GMC) takes shape. Having launched May 1, 2022, the GMC does not have a final book of rules and structure. The existing documents represent a "transitional period of 12 to 18 months until its convening conference" (globalmethodist.org).

You may have heard...

There are two pathways in the Book of Discipline for local churches to disaffiliate from the TAC:
1) ¶2548.2 (requiring a 50% + 1 vote)
2) ¶2553 (requiring a 2/3 vote)

You should know...

¶2553 is the only paragraph in the Book of Discipline which speaks directly to church disaffiliation and is agreed upon by bishops and annual conferences to be the best pathway. The consensus of a 2/3 majority is required under ¶2553. Regardless of disaffiliation pathway, standard financial responsibilities must be met by a disaffiliating church according to conference policy. Disaffiliating pastors should know they will be required by Wespath to cash out their pension at a 7% penalty.

You may have heard...

¶2548.2 is the preferred option because of the lower vote threshold.

You should know...

¶2548.2 is not about a congregation disaffiliating from the UMC. This paragraph sets guidelines for a defunct church to deed its unused property to a different denomination. Judicial Council will rule later this year if this paragraph is constitutional to use for disaffiliation. It would be confusing and chaotic for a church to start the discernment process under one set of guidelines and have to backtrack to a constitutionally approved pathway. Additionally, the consensus of a 2/3 majority as required under ¶2553 helps a church stay viable. Many of our churches couldn't continue if they lost half of their members, not to mention the relational and spiritual damage incurred by a split vote.

You may have heard...

Churches can't afford to take their time to enter a discernment process.

You should know...

Each church's timing with an agreed-upon process should be honored. A false urgency to decide quickly is guided by fear and will only cause disruption and division at the local church level.

Conversation Starters

For Laity Whose Churches Are in the Discernment Process

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Don't disparage the Global Methodist Church (GMC) or anyone who wants to join it.
- Start by giving them the floor, asking them their opinions. Really listen.
- Share a reason you're feeling called to remain in the UMC.
- Share a question you have about the GMC.
- Ask them what wonderings they have.
- Tell them you'll be praying for God's Holy Spirit to lead the church, as you're sure they are.

Possible Reasons for Not Going into the GMC

You made a covenant to serve God in the UMC. One could argue: yes, but others have broken the covenant. In response: two wrongs don't make a right.

.....

The UMC is your spiritual home and has many good qualities you're not ready to give up.

.....

The UMC is already a global church, collaboratively working around the world in missions, disaster relief, education, and much more.

.....

You're concerned about the church's ability to bring new folks to Christ if you become a part of a church perceived to be purposefully exclusionary.

.....

You're concerned about how many church members may leave.

.....

You value being a part of a church where all perspectives are welcome.

.....

Missions like UM ARMY and UMCOR are important to you.

.....

You are affirming of LGBTQ people and their families.

.....

You are not sure you're affirming of LGBTQ people, but you're more comfortable erring on the side of grace than judgment.

.....

The GMC has not had its convening conference yet, so you don't know what you'll be getting.

.....

There are too many unanswered questions.

.....

You don't know what it would mean for church finances.

.....

You don't know what it would mean for how your church would appoint future pastors.

.....

Disobedience to the *Book of Discipline* in other states/ annual conferences does not greatly affect your local church's ministry or calling.

.....

Possible Questions About the GMC

How do you think our approach to the gospel will change in a new denomination? In preaching? In Sunday School resources?

.....

Do you believe this is an issue worth dividing the church over?

.....

Will everyone in my family or friend circles feel welcome in a GMC church?

.....

Do we believe we're going to reach more people for Christ by moving into the GMC?

.....

How will differences of opinion be handled?

.....

If we no longer have UM ARMY or UMCOR, what alternatives will we create?

.....

If the child of a same-sex couple comes forward for baptism or confirmation, will they be able to get baptized or confirmed in the GMC?

.....

Do you think we'll be more faithful Christians as members of the GMC?

.....

Why would we go into the GMC before we know what its doctrine, structure, finances, congregational support, or size will be?

.....

Who will be in charge of the GMC?

.....

Since in the GMC, a church can be removed for not paying apportionments after 1 year, are we confident we'll always be able to pay apportionments in full?

.....

Is my pastor okay losing 7% of his or her pension to leave the UMC pension plan?

.....

There will be no guaranteed appointments in the GMC and it is unclear that a bishop will be able to tell a pastor where to serve. How will our church attract a pastor? What will our plan be if we can't find one?

.....

I CORINTHIANS 1:10

Now I encourage you,
brothers and sisters,
in the name of
our Lord Jesus Christ:
Agree with each other and
don't be divided into rival groups.
Instead, **be restored with
the same mind and
the same purpose.**

That We May Be One
twmbo.org

Save the Date

Join us for a livestream Q&A
on **Tuesday, June 14, at 6 pm.**
We will share information about
the local church discernment
process and other resources.
Bring your questions!

twmbo.org/live



Get Involved

Scan this QR code to receive email and
text messages from TWMB0, or go
directly to the contact form at
bit.ly/twmbo22

FOR MORE INFORMATION

thatwemaybeoneTAC@gmail.com | twmbo.org

Tips for Laity in Local Churches

- 1. Be a calming presence.** There is too much anxiety and confusion among us. Gently point out when a speaker is speaking in a spirit of fear. Witness to the peace of Christ and refuse to spread fear or sow discord and division. We are not enemies! We are co-laborers in the kingdom of God.
- 2. Earnestly pray and advocate for unity.** Offer to facilitate a Bible study or a devotional series at your church, in your home or as part of committee meetings. TWMB0 has developed several spiritual resources intended for small groups (twmbo.org). In your conversations, model a genuine and grace-filled attitude. In disagreement, do not disparage or attack. Share helpful resources by presenting information and educating others on what is going on. TWMB0 will continue to publish resources on the website and send emails to keep you in the know.
- 3. Express your concerns and ask questions of those in positions of authority.** Talk to members of your church's committees (Church Council, Trustees, lay leader, etc). Communicate with your pastor and district superintendent. If things don't make sense, be persistent in getting the answers you seek. Need help? Email thatwemaybeoneTAC@gmail.com
- 4. Promote a lay-led discernment process.** If your pastor is encouraging your church to enter the discernment process to disaffiliate, request at the next Church Council meeting to establish a lay-led team to guide the church through its discernment process. Pastors come and go. Ask for a strong layperson to chair the team.
- 5. Advocate for fair representation.** Seek voices of different theological perspectives on human sexuality and the future of the denomination. If the conference's Future Discernment Task Force presents materials, use them. These materials have been developed in an effort to offer unbiased resources prepared by people who represent a wide range of perspectives.
- 6. Practice patience.** Call out the false urgency to join the Global Methodist Church (GMC). It's a 30-day-old denomination that won't officially set up its doctrine, missions, pastor appointment system, etc. for at least another year. The GMC is not officially recognized by the World Methodist Council. Its book of rules and structure is transitional and offers a set of intentions rather than official church law. To be viable as a new denomination, the GMC is dependent upon local churches disaffiliating and quickly. Nothing has changed in the UMC and won't until 2024, at the earliest. It's okay to wait and see. A rushed discernment process clouded in fear is not helpful to the vitality of a local church.