



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Why has the General Conference been postponed yet again to May 2024?

That's a great question, and the General Commission on the General Conference has given reasons for their decision with which we strongly disagree that have to do with visa availability and COVID-19. In the end, it really doesn't matter. We have to abide by the decision. That said, we are no longer willing to let the Council of Bishops and Commission on the General Conference have influence over the destiny of our movement. That is why the Global Methodist Church will launch on May 1, 2022 and begin allowing local churches to withdraw/disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church and align with the GMC.

2. Where can I find out more information about the Global Methodist Church?

To learn more about the Global Methodist Church go to [www.globalmethodist.org](http://www.globalmethodist.org). You can read the entire Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline on that website. Additionally, the names of the members of the Transitional Leadership Council are published as well as other information. We strongly suggest that you sign up to receive the email newsletter that is sent out frequently. The GMC has tried to be fully transparent in everything it has done.

3. What are the ways that a local church can depart The UMC and join the Global Methodist Church?

There are four ways a local church can depart The UMC and join the GMC:

- Disaffiliation under ¶2553 requiring at least two year's apportionments and the church's pro rata share of unfunded pension liability plus other requirements
- Withdrawal under ¶2548.2 allowing a local UMC to essentially move from The UMC to an evangelical denomination like the GMC. A comity agreement must be approved between the local church, the GMC, and the Annual Conference (Bishop/Cabinet, District Board of Church Location & Building, and Annual Conference meeting)
- Closure under ¶2549 where the local church will close and then could negotiate to purchase its real estate/assets
- Depart The UMC and refuse to turn over assets under the trust clause with the understanding a lawsuit will likely ensue. (We believe this is the option of last resort and potentially the most expensive.)

4. What is the difference between ¶2553 that allows for disaffiliation and ¶2548.2 which allows for withdrawal and alignment with another evangelical church?

Paragraph 2553 was added to *The Book of Discipline* by the special-called 2019 General Conference. It was known as the “Taylor Disaffiliation Petition.” Although it passed, it was not the favored legislation by the WCA. The WCA favored the “Boyette Disaffiliation Petition.” The Boyette Petition had far less onerous provisions to it. To read ¶2553, you must go to the following website because a new *Book of Discipline* has not been published: <https://www.umofficialresources.com/updates/15/book-of-discipline-addendum-and-errata-december-2019>. Paragraph 2553 also “sunset” on December 31, 2023.

Paragraph 2584.2 has existed in *The Book of Discipline* prior to the 2019 General Conference. It allows for a local church to withdraw from the Florida Conference and align with a different evangelical church upon the approval of the annual conference, cabinet, and district board of church location and building. While ¶2548.2 does not mention requirements related to additional apportionments to be paid, we believe it is likely that the Florida Conference will require the same two years of apportionments they have been requiring for disaffiliations under ¶2553. It is our hope that if a church aligns with the Global Methodist Church, they will not have to pay their pro-rata share of unfunded pension liabilities. We hope a comity agreement can be worked out where local churches sign a promissory note for the liabilities. There are more details/complexity to it that we would be happy to discuss with your church. Part of the promissory note would include a provision that if a local church later chooses to disaffiliate from the GMC, it will have to pay its liabilities in full at that time.

5. Can you explain what the unfunded pension liabilities are all about?

It gets complicated quickly, so please feel free to discuss it with our president, Jay Therrell, directly. He chaired the task force that has created the new retirement system for the Global Methodist Church. The United Methodist Church has multiple retirement plans. The current plan is called the Clergy Retirement Security Plan or CRSP. It has both defined-contribution and defined-benefit components. The CRSP-defined benefit component is unfunded on a market basis. The plan is only about 16-years-old and as it continues to accumulate more assets, its funding level grows. Over time, the liabilities should get smaller and hopefully will eventually go away entirely. The Global Methodist Church’s new retirement plan is a defined contribution plan and will never create unfunded liabilities.

6. If the pastor of our church won’t allow the church council to begin the process of disaffiliation, can the laity do so? If our pastor doesn’t move to the GMC, how will we get a new one?

Yes! Paragraph 248 of *The Book of Discipline* allows 10% of the professing membership of a local church to call a church conference by sending a petition with signed names to the District Superintendent. The reason for the church conference must be stated: to inform the Florida Conference that our church intends to begin the withdrawal process under ¶2548.2 of the Book of Discipline and unite with the Global Methodist Church. This will only start the process. Later there will have to be another meeting to officially vote to withdraw.

If a local church's pastor does not follow them to the Global Methodist Church, the bishop or president pro tempore for the local church's GMC annual conference will appoint a new clergy person for their church. The GMC's Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline guarantees that local churches and their pastors that transfer together will stay together. We want as few pastoral moves as possible during the transition period before the first General Conference.

7. Why shouldn't we just wait until the General Conference meets in 2024 and see if the Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace Through Separation passes?

We no longer have confidence that the Protocol will pass at the 2024 General Conference. By that time, four years will have passed since it was negotiated. During those four years, we will have been through a presidential election, two congressional elections, a years-long global pandemic, and multiple world crises. Moreover, several of the major conveners of the group that negotiated the Protocol, including Bishop John Yambasu, have died. Additionally, ¶2553 will sunset on December 31, 2023 – before the General Conference convenes. There is no assurance that the 2024 General Conference would approve such a measure again. The longer your local church waits, the riskier it becomes. We believe even waiting for the 2023 Florida Annual Conference is a risk possibly not worth taking. Much could change between now and then including the possibility that the Florida Conference might receive a new bishop.

8. What is the process to follow under ¶2548.2?

We are not entirely sure, but we believe the annual conference will set the process in a similar fashion to what they have been doing for disaffiliations under ¶2553. The process begins with the church leadership (and pastor/s if they are transitioning to the GMC) writing a letter to the bishop, assistant to the bishop, district superintendent, and conference treasurer informing them that the church is seeking to withdraw from the Florida Conference and align with the Global Methodist Church under ¶2548.2. From there, a comity agreement must be negotiated between the local church, the Florida Conference, and the Global Methodist Church. We can assist you with comity agreement provisions. Please talk with our president, Jay Therrell. The GMC's Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline covers accepting churches under ¶355. It can be read at [www.globalmethodist.org](http://www.globalmethodist.org).

9. What is process for clergy to transfer to the Global Methodist Church?

Currently or formerly licensed or ordained United Methodist Clergy may transfer to the Global Methodist Church. Clergy ***should not*** withdraw their credentials from The UMC until they speak with a representative from the WCA or GMC. WCA Vice President for Clergy and Church Relations, Angela Pleasants, is working on a simple process for clergy to transfer. As that process becomes available soon, we will share it. The GMC's Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline covers accepting clergy under ¶417 which can be read at [www.globalmethodist.org](http://www.globalmethodist.org). Clergy retirement accounts will continue to remain at Wespath. All balances from the legacy plans (Pre-82, MPP, CRSP) will continue to grow (or decline) as the markets fluctuate. On the day the clergy person becomes a GMC pastor, they will automatically be enrolled in the new GMC retirement plan.

10. If we vote to join the Global Methodist Church, what will be different about it theologically?

Nothing! You will literally go to bed the night before your effective date to join the Global Methodist Church and wake up the next morning with your church holding the same traditionalist theological beliefs. The GMC will be orthodox in its theology including holding to the 6,000-year Christian definition of marriage.

11. What will change if our church joins the Global Methodist Church?

There will be some differences, and we believe that they are all good! The Global Methodist Church will be leaner and less complex. For example, the GMC Book of Doctrines and Discipline is 103 pages. The UMC Book of Discipline is 898 pages! There will be less infrastructure and overhead to support with apportionments. That will mean local churches will retain more money to be used to make disciples of Jesus that worship passionately, love extravagantly, and witness boldly. Local churches will have much more control over how they organize. The ordination process will be simpler and allow qualified clergy to be ordained much faster. There will be no trust clause allowing local churches to fully own their property.

12. The Florida Conference Cabinet has offered a covenant to entice traditionalist-leaning churches to stay in the post separation-UMC. The covenant allegedly says that the Cabinet promises only to appoint traditionalist pastors to those churches. Is this covenant valid?

No! First, the covenant is unenforceable for the long-term. The moment the Florida Conference has a new bishop, the covenant will be subject to change. (This is likely to happen by January 1, 2023.) Additionally, once the district superintendents change and the makeup of the Cabinet is different, the majority could easily decide not to honor it. (The overwhelming majority of the current district superintendents will retire or rotate off the cabinet in the next 12 months.) Moreover, we believe that the vast majority of Florida Conference traditionalist clergy will transfer into the Global Methodist Church leaving

almost none behind to be appointed to traditionalist-leaning churches. Our lay leaders have told us that in 2020 when two traditionalist leaning churches needed appointments, the Cabinet had a difficult time finding a pastor that could serve either church. This will only get worse.

13. What is the voting threshold under ¶2548.2 for a church to disaffiliate from The UMC and join the Global Methodist Church?

Paragraph 2548.2 does not set a threshold and so we argue that by default that simple majority is used when a super-majority is not specified. That said, the Florida Conference could attempt to set a super-majority when they negotiate a comity agreement with your local church. We strongly recommend negotiating for a simple majority vote. We believe the will of the majority should be allowed to make the decision without setting up hurdles. Setting a threshold at two thirds allows the minority to control the future of the church. Additionally, if a two-thirds threshold is selected and 66% of the church conference votes to withdraw and align with the GMC, the vote will fail. If 66% of your church votes to align with the GMC and it doesn't happen, your church is likely to have an immediate leadership problem on its hands. Some progressives have made comments like, "Big decisions require big voting thresholds." We find this comment to be disingenuous. The General Conference would have adopted (or defeated) the Protocol for Separation to divide a 13-million member denomination on a simple majority vote. The 2016-2020 General Church budget of \$604 million was approved by a simple majority vote. If those significant proposals can be adopted on a simple majority, surely a local church can do so.

14. Florida is blessed to have a diverse population and currently the Florida Conference has African American, Latino, Haitian, and Korean churches. Will they be welcome in the new denomination?

Yes! Yes! Yes! We are tremendously blessed by our sisters and brothers from multiple cultures, and we desperately want their witness to be added to the numbers of the new church. Jesus commanded us to go into all the world to make disciples for Him, and we are better when the church has a similar makeup to God's global kingdom. The Transitional Leadership Council of the Global Methodist Church is extremely diverse including African Americans, a Russian, Africans, Filipinos, a Latino, and a Korean. The WCA-FL has raised \$1.1 million to help ensure that our Latino and Haitian churches will have a full year of pastoral support (equitable compensation) in the bank on day one of the Florida Conference of the Global Methodist Church. We are committed to standing with our Latino and Haitian sisters and brothers to advocate for their property and the necessary resources for their churches to thrive.

15. I've heard that the Global Methodist Church will have an appointment system that will allow churches to have a veto over who their pastor is. I'm afraid that will keep women and persons of color from ever getting appointed. Is that true?

No! This was one of the important decisions reached at the meeting that led to the formation of the Global Methodist Church. The appointment system in the Global Methodist Church will be similar to the current system. The new system, however, does give churches and clergy guaranteed and enhanced consultation in the process with the right to request reconsideration. The GMC will have a strong commitment to female clergy and clergy of color.

16. Will bishops continue to be elected for life in the Global Methodist Church? Will the GMC have district superintendents?

Bishops will be elected for a term of years. At the end of their term, bishops will either return to the local church or elect senior status (retirement). Former bishops may retain the title “bishop emeritus” and be addressed as “bishop.” The Global Methodist Church will have district superintendents. They will be called presiding elders, but they will have similar duties to current DSEs.

17. I’ve heard that the Global Methodist Church will not have a status for licensed local pastors. Is that true?

We have wonderful news for local pastors! Local pastors, depending on their educational level (Course of Study, Bachelor’s or Master’s Degrees), will transition into the Global Methodist Church as either ordained deacons or elders. For a complete list of the education requirements for ordination, we encourage you to go to [www.globalmethodist.org](http://www.globalmethodist.org) and click on the link to read the Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline. Scroll down to paragraph 407.

18. If our church leans towards being traditionalists, but our pastor leans towards being a progressive, what should we do?

The decision to align with the Global Methodist Church ultimately lies with the church members – not the pastor. If your pastor chooses to remain with The UMC, she or he will be appointed to a new church once your congregation aligns with the GMC. We encourage you to treat your pastor with love, grace, and respect. We also encourage you to follow Jesus’ teaching from the Sermon on the Mount to be clear and forthright with your clergy. (Matthew 5:33-37) If your clergy person insists on lobbying the church to remain with The UMC, respectfully request equal time to share the advantages of joining the GMC. Please feel free to contact the WCA-FL president, Jay Therrell, for guidance.

19. What should I do if I’m a traditionalist, but my church votes to remain with The UMC?

In this case, you have a hard decision to make. You must decide if you can remain with your church or if you want to find a new one. We encourage you to pray to God for discernment. We are happy to help you figure out what Global Methodist Churches would

be closest to you. Lastly, if there are enough traditionalist laity in your church that might be interested in starting a new church or merging with a like-minded group from another church in a similar situation, then please let us know! We will pass along that information to the interim leadership for Florida (once that is decided).

20. Can I financially support the WCA-FL?

Yes! In fact, we need your support! We have a small budget to accomplish our vision of helping to launch a Florida Conference of the Global Methodist Church, and we can't do it without you! When you join the WCA (which we encourage you to do), those dues go to the global organization. We need your help to make our Florida vision become reality.

- We have launched the **No Church Left Behind Campaign** ("NCLB"). NCLB has two funds:
  - The Ethnic Church Fund will ensure that on day one of a new Florida Conference that our Haitian and Latino churches have resources to help them with pastoral support. They have been hit especially hard during the pandemic. We have closed this fund because it has been doubly subscribed. We have already raised \$1.1 million. Praise God!
  - The Launch Fund will ensure that a new Florida Conference has the resources it needs to plant new churches, revitalize existing ones, and begin a new day for orthodox Florida Methodism.
- WCA-FL Operations: You can make a one-time or recurring donation by going to [www.wcafl.net](http://www.wcafl.net) and clicking "donate."
- If you would like to write a check, it can be mailed to WCA-FL, ATTN: Chris Akers, Treasurer, 1395 Campus View Court, Oviedo, Florida 32765.
- If you would like to donate securities, we have a brokerage account and Treasurer Chris Akers can assist you. His cell phone is 321/439.9715.
- The WCA-FL is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization.

21. If I have further questions, where can I go for answers?

There are multiples places you can go.

1. We encourage you to contact our president, Jay Therrell. He can be reached at 904/553.7646 or at [jay@wcafl.net](mailto:jay@wcafl.net). He's always glad to talk with you.
2. The website for the Global Methodist Church is [www.globalmethodist.org](http://www.globalmethodist.org).
3. We encourage you to "like" our Facebook page. We post updates frequently. You can search for it under: Wesleyan Covenant Association – Florida.
4. Our WCA-FL website is a great place to find current information. You will find it at [www.wcafl.net](http://www.wcafl.net).
5. Our YouTube Channel has excellent FAQ Videos that are each less than three minutes. Search for Wesleyan Covenant Association – Florida.
6. The website for the global WCA is [www.wesleyan covenant.org](http://www.wesleyan covenant.org).