

Date

Bishop Kenneth H. Carter, Jr.  
The Rev. Alex Shanks, Assistant to the Bishop  
The Rev. Insert Name, District Superintendent  
Mr. Craig Smelser, Treasurer/Director of Administrative Services  
The Florida Conference of The United Methodist Church  
450 Martin L. King, Jr. Avenue  
Lakeland, Florida 33815

Re: Withdrawal from The United Methodist Church

Dear Bishop Carter, Rev. Shanks, Superintendent \_\_\_\_\_, and Mr. Smelser:

Grace and peace to you in the Name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We are writing to inform you of our intent to withdraw from The Florida Conference of The United Methodist Church under ¶2548.2 of *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church (2016)*, as amended in 2019. We will be seeking to align with the Global Methodist Church, an evangelical denomination, after it forms on May 1, 2022.

Our [insert name of your leadership team] has voted to pursue withdrawal and join the Global Methodist Church because of The UMC's continuing disobedience to and disregard of our doctrines and discipline regarding homosexuality in marriage and ordination. There is no accountability for clergy in our annual conference who perform same-sex weddings or who are even themselves in a same-sex marriage.

The 2019 Annual Conference was a watershed moment for our local church. We left it feeling that the Florida Conference of The United Methodist Church no longer wanted us. In many ways, we felt dejected and unwelcome. We watched a clergy person, who was currently under complaint for performing same sex weddings, serve Holy Communion. Many theologically liberal clergy persons wore t-shirts that used our own baptismal vows, written in rainbow colors, to clearly indicate that we, traditionalists, are evil, unjust oppressors. Moreover, there was raucous cheering when theological conservatives were shut out of General and Jurisdictional Conference elections. Neither the shirts nor the raucous cheering was rebuked or corrected including by the bishop. Since then, the direction of The United Methodist Church concerning LGBT+ issues, including marriage and ordination, has become even more obvious.

We are on two very different paths that are irreconcilable. Our beliefs regarding sexuality are not a matter of mere opinion or interpretation but are the plain truth of Scripture proclaimed by the wider, orthodox church for two millennia. The Judeo/Christian definition of marriage is over 7,000 years old. Further, we believe that our disagreement with the course of

The UMC regarding sexuality is a presenting symptom of a deeper theological divide over biblical inspiration and authority, as well as the Lordship of Jesus. We believe the Global Methodist Church shares our orthodox doctrine, theology, scriptural understanding, and missiology.

We bear no ill will toward anyone even though we feel that we have become outsiders in our own denomination. We firmly believe that staying in The UMC any longer will be detrimental to our mission, and we call upon the Conference leadership to allow us to move quickly through the process including being included on the agenda of the 2022 Florida Annual Conference meeting. Please advise us of our next steps, and we will do our best to meet every deadline in a timely and expeditious manner. God bless you.

Grace and peace,

Pastor

Chair of Church Council, Lay Leader, Etc.