



What is Happening in the United Methodist Church?

Church Council Presentation
By Taskforce Committee
July 31, 2022

Our Committee

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Chair

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Advisor to the Task Force

Pastor Jill Jackson-Sears and Pastor Andy Roberts
Pastors

Purpose

The study of facts involved in the choices of current or other denomination affiliation for the future of Lake Highlands UMC.



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LHUMC Mission

Our mission at Lake Highlands United Methodist Church is to transform the people of Lake Highlands and beyond by Connecting through the love of Christ, Deepening relationships with Christ, and Serving with the heart of Christ.

Core Values

Lake Highlands United Methodist Church is...

- A Christ-Centered Church
- A Disciple Making Church
- A Biblically Shaped Church
- A Compassionate Church
- A Praying Church
- A Multi-Generational Church
- A Church of Fellowship
- A Wesleyan Church

Fun Facts

Locally Founded

The United Methodist Church was created in 1968 in Dallas, Texas by joining of Evangelical United Brethren Church and The Methodist Church.

Wesleyan Roots

Methodism dates back to the 1700s when John and Charles Wesley sought to spread the Methodist movement to help others grow in their faith.

Today

The UMC is a worldwide connection of more than 12 million members in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the United States.

Polity

The UMC is not a legal structure but an organized church government that includes: the General Conference, The Council of Bishops, and The Judicial Court.

Division in the Church

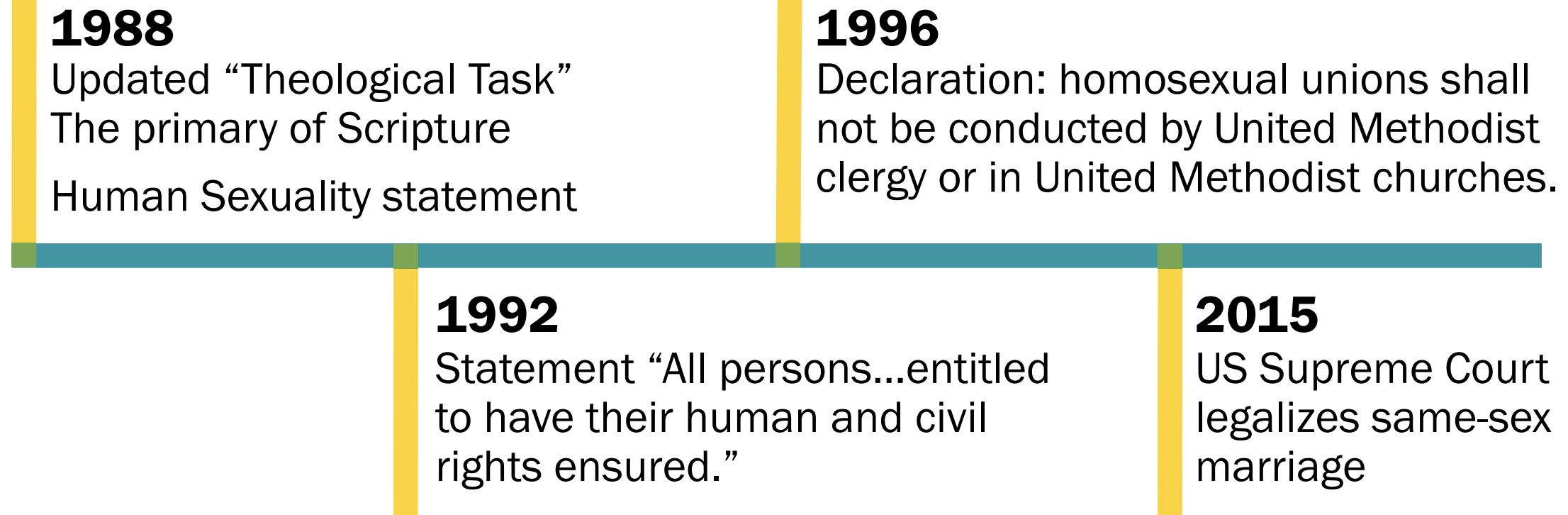
Homosexuality is the presenting issue, but authority of Scripture is the primary issue.

Debates in the UMC on different beliefs of both the authority of Scripture and Human Sexuality date back to 1972 (50 years).

Key Dates



Key Dates



Key Dates

2016

111 UMC clergy & candidates came out as gay ; Rev. Oliveto elected first gay bishop; Bishops asked to lead way to unity

2019

Traditional Plan adopted
¶ 2553 added to Book of Discipline to allow for disaffiliation process

2017

UMC Judicial Council rules Oliveto's appointment violates Church Law

2020, 2021, 2022

GC postponed
GMC launched 5/1/22
NTC publishes revised General Framework 6/28/22

Disaffiliation Process and Timeline

1. Standard Terms

Standard form set.
Annual Conferences
may develop
additional standards

2. Apportionments

Unpaid apportionments
due 12 months prior to
disaffiliation plus
additional 12 months

3. Property

Disaffiliating local
church has right to
retain property

4. Pension Liability

Pro rate share of
unfunded pension
liability due to
Annual Conference

5. Other Liabilities

All debts, loans,
liabilities, must be
satisfied, assigned, or
transferred.

Disaffiliation Process and Timeline



6. Payment Terms

Payment shall occur prior to effective date of departure

7. Pension/Health

Disaffiliating churches continuing Wesleyan theology, tradition, and roots eligible to continue plans.

8. Trust Clause

When all funds due paid and no liabilities, all claims under Trust Clause released.

Disaffiliation Process and Timeline

Aug. 15, 2022

Initial conversation with DS and pastor / lay leadership

Oct. 1, 2022

Initial meeting with local church and DS / Discernment Team

Dec. 1, 2022

DS receive letter from pastor indicating his/her intentions

Dec. 31, 2022

DS receive letter from church requesting church conference for disaffiliation

Mar. 1, 2023

Church Conference must meet and approve disaffiliation process

Disaffiliation Process and Timeline



Apr. 1, 2023

Local church, BS,
Assist to Bishop
prepare legislative
item for Annual
Conference Action



Jun. 6, 2023

Annual Conference
votes on the
disaffiliation resolution



Dec. 31, 2023

All terms of
disaffiliation
resolution must be
met

Denominations

Similarities in UMC and GMC

- Connectional Conference Structure
- Church Council, SPRC Finance, Board of Trustees, Nominations
- Baptism of infants, children, youth and adults by sprinkling, pouring or immersion
- Confirmation process important for children to make profession of faith
- Appointment system of pastors
- District Superintendents (Presiding Elders) who oversee pastors and churches

Slight Differences

- Mission Statement
- Terms and salary for Bishops
- Teachings on Human Sexuality
- References to homosexuality

Denominations

Key Areas of Difference

- Expectation of local churches and clergy related to theological beliefs and what is taught in churches
- UMC: Book of Discipline
- GMC: Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline with first convening conference 12-18 months after formation to finish work on Discipline
- Church property – UMC: Trust Clause; GMC: no trust clause, local church has full ownership and control
- Apportionment System
- UMC Social Principles: not binding on clergy and local churches vs GMC Social Witness: clergy and local churches must agree to support and teach the Social Witness
- Retirement of Clergy

Denominations

Other Considerations

- Curriculum
- Discernment
- Financial Backing
- Connection with Denomination

Legal

Trust Clause

- All properties of United Methodist local churches are held, in trust, for the benefit of the entire denomination, and ownership and usage of church property is subject to the Discipline.

LHUMC Charter

- Charter filed with State of Texas on February 9, 1984, as a perpetual domestic nonprofit corporation.
- Charter complies with and references UMC Trust Clause.
- State of Texas recognizes local churches with 501(c)(3) status as nonprofit corporations.

Case Law

- Cases pending re: varied AC process and burdens
- Supreme Court: Courts may resolve property disputes but not theological concerns.
- Dallas County: No enforceable express or implied trust as a matter of law. (SCJC vs SMU)
- Texas Supreme Court: Recently invalidated a similar trust clause by the Episcopal Church.

Finance

Financial Impacts

- Since 2019, members have been leaving our church and members have been joining our church due to tensions in UMC and for other reasons
- Not possible to predict decrease or increase in giving

If Remain in UMC

- Unknown if apportionments will be affected
- If LHUMC decides to disaffiliate after ¶ 2553 expires, potentially lose \$8.9 million plus in assets, excluding land value

If Disaffiliate

- Additional year of apportionments due
- Pro rata share unfunded pension obligations
- Change of bank accounts, insurance, etc.
- Unknown ins. cost / coverage
- Cost for signage, website, and collateral
- Professional fees to incorporate new entity / tax exempt status



Question for Council

Proceed with a time of discussion, discernment, and prayer for the entire congregation to consider the facts as they would relate to the most faithful future for LHUMC.

OR

Do not proceed with a time of discussion, discernment, and prayer for the entire congregation to consider the facts as they would relate to the most faithful future for LHUMC.



Thank You
