

## STATEMENT FROM YOUR PASTORS ON THE UMC

Bishop Carter of the WNCC recently opened a speech with these words: *In the preface to the General Rules of Methodists, John Wesley used these words, describing us. We are a community of persons... Having the form and seeking the power of Godliness, United in prayer, listening to teaching in order to watch over one another in love So that we may help each other to work out our salvation.*

Bishop Carter presented this speech in response to unfolding events in our UMC: 1) the cancellation of General Conference until spring of 2024, and 2) the announcement of a break away denomination to be called the Global Methodists. In response, Pastor Cade and I are addressing you today.

Most likely you have heard the rumblings of a “UM church split” that was to happen following General Conference 2020, postponed until 2022 and now 2024. It is true that representatives from all UM spectrums had worked out a grace-filled pathway, known as the “protocol” for those wishing to depart that was to be voted upon at General Conference 2020.

*“The protocol is a pathway to a new form of Methodism for those wishing to depart. It hinges on recognition of an evangelical denomination. And that hinges on MUTUAL RECOGNITION... those who remain will not disparage those who are departing. And those who are departing will not bear false witness against those who continue in the UMC... This is mutual recognition of each other, IN Christ.”*

I say all of this to preface the setting of where we are. After the General Conference was delayed again due to lack of vaccinations and the backlog in travel visas among the 40 countries that make up the UMC, it was announced by those wishing to break from the UMC that they will not wait until after the General Conference in 2024 to start their new denomination. The new Global Methodist Church denomination will begin THIS May 1, 2022. It is unfortunate and heartbreaking that it seems we can't be in a season of waiting together, unified in prayer and faith, until the body of UM joins together at General Conference. It is also sorrowful that false information and narratives are being spread. Know that WHEN General Conference meets and makes decisions for the UMC, we will inform you of that. Know that we will inform you of the decision made by our own conference and church leadership as well.

As your pastors, Cade and I want you to know what is going on. NOTHING has been officially decided by the elected voting body of the UMC. If you are contacted and told you must decide as a local congregation whether to remain UM, that is untrue. If you are contacted by the WCA

to attend a meeting on disaffiliating with the UMC or becoming a member of the Global Methodists, please let one of your pastors know.

At this time OUR CHURCH governing body will make NO decisions until AFTER General Conference 2024. But know this, WE ARE COMMITTED TO REMAINING United Methodist AND WE ARE COMMITTED TO REMAINING DILWORTH UMC.

(Pastor Michelle)

I did not grow up in the UMC but chose it because of its strong theological roots and OPEN hospitality. As your pastor, I will remain UMC. As long as I have breath, I will live out my call as a United Methodist pastor who affirms the inspired Holy scriptures, the General Rules and the Doctrinal Standards of the traditional United Methodist church. I will serve with and among ALL of God's children and I will work for total inclusion in the life of the church.

(Pastor Cade)

I grew up in the UMC and am committed to remaining part of this denomination which has nurtured my faith and affirmed my call. Further, I look forward to remaining part of a denomination that is willing to discern how it can better affirm and include LGBTQ persons in the life of the church and its ministry. I pray for such a change to be reflected in the polity of our denomination.

As your pastors we affirm:

- We will continue to affirm the primacy of scripture interpreted through the Holy Spirit and Wesleyan way of tradition, experience and reason as God's gifts to us.
- We will live in the grace of salvation offered to us as a gift from God.
- We will openly confess Jesus as Lord.
- We will continue to serve in a church that is FOR AND WITH ALL PEOPLE, regardless of race, sexual orientation, theological stream, economic class, nationality and political party FOR WE ARE ALL ONE IN JESUS CHRIST.
- We will stand in solidarity with Bishop Carter and all bishops who in good faith signed the Protocol of Separation through Grace and Reconciliation and have ceased the legal complaint processes related to LGBTQ+ persons in our church.
- We will work to do no harm, do good and stay in love with God. (General Rules of UMC)

We leave you with these final words from our WNCC Bishop Carter, who asks us to do the following:

1. Work to strengthen our connection, not to tear it down.
2. Do not leave. Stay and work toward a reformed, revived and reimagined UMC for a world that needs a spiritual home, “a community of love and forgiveness”.
3. Do not call others unbiblical. Read and study your own Bible in community and let it form you.
4. If you support the Protocol, live by the spirit of the protocol, a document informed and infused with the qualities of reconciliation and grace.
5. Be mature spiritual leaders in a season of waiting.
6. Support your local church.
7. If you must leave, let’s do that with a mutual blessing. We are not enemies.
8. If you will remain, and I am convinced the great majority will, do not be silent. Say a good word about your faith, your local church, your pastor. Say a good word about the United Methodist Church. One expression of this is #BeUMC.
9. Watch over one another in love, in order to work out your own salvation.
10. Pray for me, pray for each other. I will pray daily for you.

IF you wish to discuss any of this further, know that our pastoral ears are ready to listen and our hearts are open to share with you. Please reach out to us.

May the grace, love and peace of Jesus Christ surround and live within us all,  
Pastor Michelle