

FAQ from the Discernment Team about the current UMC controversy

- 1. Why all the fuss?** Slightly more than ½ of the 2019 UMC Special General Conference delegates voted to keep the Book of Discipline policy on homosexuality basically unchanged and slightly less than ½ voted to liberalize it. There are also accountability, governing and financial issues that have been sources of controversy for years. These issues may be equally important to many people and are contributing to the controversy. The irreconcilable differences between traditionalist and progressives have made splitting the denomination inevitable.
- 2. Is WMUMC in the process of disaffiliating from the United Methodist Church?** No. Disaffiliation would require a Church Conference called by our District Superintendent and a 2/3 vote for disaffiliation by the congregational members present at the Conference. (Paragraph 2553 of the 2019 Addendum to the UMC Book of Discipline.)
- 3. Can the WMUMC clergy, the Administrative Team or the Discernment Team disaffiliate for WMUMC?** No.
- 4. Is there a rush to make a decision now?** No. In fact, we don't want to rush. The issues are complicated and some matters cannot be fully known until after the 2024 General Conference. Currently, we don't expect any decisions before the 2024 Conference, but the situation is fluid and we may need to adjust if things change.
- 5. Will we have to vote at all?** That is unknown at this time, but seems very possible eventually.
- 6. What is the current UMC stance on homosexuality and where can I find it?** The UMC acknowledges that all people are of sacred worth. We affirm the sanctity of marriage... between a man and a woman. The practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching. Practicing homosexuals may not be ordained as ministers in the United Methodist Church. A clergy member... may be charged with... being a self-avowed practicing homosexual; or conducting ceremonies which celebrate homosexual unions; or performing same-sex wedding ceremonies. You can find these policies in the 2016 UMC Book of Discipline (BOD), paragraphs 4, 161, 304.3 & 2702.1; 2711.3 (minimum penalties in 2019 Addendum to BOD).
- 7. What do I, as a member of WMUMC, need to be doing?** Pray for wisdom and that we as a church are acting in accordance with the will of God. Treat each other and our Pastors with kindness and charity. Get informed about the issues. The discernment team is trying to help, but it will take some time to research the issues thoroughly. Don't believe everything you read on social media or in the secular media. Search for facts from reliable sources. Call a discernment team member if you have issues that you would like us to research. Prayerfully decide how you feel about the issues, so that you can vote if that is required.