

Dear Members of Wilmington Island UMC,

Since the January special called charge conference at which the membership of WIUMC voted to disaffiliate from the UMC, the church leadership has been working to fulfill the disaffiliation requirements set by the South Georgia Conference. The purpose of this email is to update you regarding what has been accomplished to date, inform you of important upcoming events, and share information and resources so you can make an informed decision regarding our church's future.

### **What's happened since the January vote**

**Jan 2023:** "What's Next" committee created to execute the disaffiliation requirements and research and recommend options for our church's future.

**Jan 2023:** church leadership retained the services of attorney Brad Folsom, who has handled the legal requirements for multiple disaffiliated UMC's and is also a member of Park Ave Methodist in Valdosta.

**Feb. 26:** After review and discussion, the "What's Next" committee approved the Articles of Incorporation and By-laws for our church that are required to take title to the church property once disaffiliation is finalized.

**Feb. 27:** After review and discussion, Church Council approved the Articles of Incorporation and By-laws

**March 6:** Articles of Incorporation and By-laws filed with the State of Georgia.

**March 19:** After researching seven theologically traditional denominations, the "What's Next" committee narrowed the options to either joining the Global Methodist Church or becoming an independent congregation.

### **Important Upcoming Events**

**April 16 @ 5 pm:** The Shearouses, former missionaries with Mission on the Move and members of Springfield Oaks Church (formerly Springfield UMC), will meet with the What's Next Committee to answer questions about their church's post disaffiliation experience. Springfield disaffiliated from the UMC in June 2022, and, after a period of independence, has voted to join the Global Methodist Church. All interested church members are invited to attend.

**April 20 @ 4 pm:** Rev. Jay Hanson, President Pro Tempore of the South GA Conference of the Global Methodist Church, will speak to our congregation and answer questions about the Global Methodist Church.

**April 24:** At regular Church Council meeting, Council will vote on holding a church conference to determine future denominational affiliation.

**April 30:** Pending approval from Council, there will be a church conference vote regarding our way forward.

**Sunday, May 21 @ 4 pm via Zoom:** Special Called Annual Conference of the South Georgia UMC. This special conference is being held solely for the purpose of voting on disaffiliation requests from

congregations in the South Georgia Conference. Kathy Restel will serve as our Lay Delegate to this conference.

**June 1:** Official retirement date from the UMC for Rev. Doug Walker. The church has a written agreement with Rev. Walker to continue to serve our congregation after his retirement from the UMC.

**July 1:** Official disaffiliation date from the UMC.

As mentioned above, the “What’s Next” committee spent several weeks researching seven theologically traditional Wesleyan denominations. Most were ruled out due to requirements such as property trust clauses, high apportionment fees, and/or lack of local connection. The committee believes the best options for our church are either joining the Global Methodist Church or becoming an independent congregation.

Attached to this email you will find a chart comparing the requirements/policies of the Global Methodist Church versus those of being an independent congregation. We encourage you to pray for discernment, read the attached chart, research the referenced websites, and attend the above-mentioned meetings on April 16 and April 20.

Thank you for your continued prayers for our church’s future.

Yours in Christ,

Bill Long  
Chair, Church Council and What’s Next Committee