



WILMINGTON ISLAND

United Methodist Church

195 Wilmington Island Rd • Savannah, GA 31410 • (912) 897-2835 • FAX (912) 897-2864

December 12, 2022

Dear Wilmington Island UMC Member,

On October 24, 2022, Church Council voted unanimously to request the District Superintendent to hold a called church conference for the purpose of voting on disaffiliation from the UMC. Disaffiliation, the process by which congregations can remove themselves from the UMC while maintaining all their assets, was developed by the General Conference in response to the long-term tension and division within the denomination.

This fifty-year conflict over foundational principles and theological divisions has intensified over the last few years. The presenting issue is human sexuality (Biblical definition of marriage and ordination of self-avowed practicing LGBTQ+ persons), but the real and much bigger issue involves our doctrine and theology as Wesleyan Methodists, and, particularly, the authority of Scripture.

Within the UMC, we see a denomination becoming increasingly accepting of clergy, including bishops, who denigrate the authority of Scripture and deny the Divinity and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, along with many other key tenets of the faith. In addition, we believe the UMC has departed from its own mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, and has instead become more focused on revising historic Christian teachings and pursuing social justice issues without preaching a Gospel that says we are all sinners in need of the grace of Jesus Christ in our life. For these reasons, we believe it is in our church's best interest to separate from the UMC.

The called church conference to vote on disaffiliation will occur on January 8, 2023, after the single combined 10 am worship service. The decision to disaffiliate must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the professing members of the local church present at the church conference. No absentee ballots will be accepted. Each member receives one ballot. If you sign in and receive a ballot but then choose to abstain, that action is counted as a "no" vote.

The ballot you will receive on January 8 will read as follows:

Shall Wilmington Island United Methodist Church disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church for reasons of conscience over disagreements related to human sexuality, or the actions or inactions of its annual conference related to these issues?

___ Yes

___ No

Please note, the ballot does not include the issue of theological division. The Conference wrote the wording for this ballot and chose to include only the presenting issue of human sexuality.

For more information about Wilmington Island UMC's disaffiliation process, please see our website www.islandmethodist.com/affiliation-discernment, or reach out to the members of the discernment committee, who are as follows: Bill Long, Charlotte Carpenter, Greg Barker, Andy Anderson, Diane Reeder, Rick Long, Jim Rayburn, and Kathy Restel.

We ask that you be in prayer for wisdom and guidance for our congregation during this time.

On behalf of the discernment committee, yours in Christ,


Bill Long, Chair

www.islandmethodist.com

Doug Walker, Senior Pastor • Inger Prescott, Financial Secretary

Wendy Amerson, Director of Preschool Programs • Caitlin Long, Director of Music Ministries

Donna Bazemore, Director of Children & Family Ministries • Angie Wittenberg, Director of Youth Ministries