

## FROM THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL: DENOMINATIONAL MATTERS

The United Methodist Church has, since its beginning, read scripture in coordination with the wisdom God also provides in tradition, reason, and experience. These four tools (scripture, tradition, reason, experience) are often called the Wesleyan Quadrilateral, and this process for engaging scripture leads us to an ongoing life of discernment. It also leads to a wide variety of faith perspectives.

This very spectrum of theological perspective has led us to be what some call a “big tent” community: different views living under one tent. Such diversity is a blessing, but it also causes strain within the church, particularly around contemporary social topics, currently homosexuality.

The Book of Discipline presently states that homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching. Furthermore, the current language restricts gay persons from being ordained or being married in the church. This “restrictive language” has been increasingly a source of pain and struggle within the denomination, and for the past 50 years General Conferences have debated it. It is anticipated that at the next General Conference, the United Methodist Church may remove the restrictive language around homosexuality currently found in the Book of Discipline.

On May 1, 2022, The Global Methodist Church was initiated—a new denomination separate from the United Methodist Church. The Global Methodist Church is a theologically conservative denomination, which reads scripture in a fashion that does not affirm same-sex marriage or the ordination of gay persons.

Congregations whose theology is in line with that of the Global Methodist Church are given a path for disaffiliating from the United Methodist Church to affiliate with the Global Methodist Church, and church councils are empowered to explore this possibility.



At the July 11, 2022 Ad Council meeting, through careful discussion, the Council determined that, while our congregation is made up of diverse theological perspectives, we are collectively a community that seeks to welcome and affirm all persons. We highly value the gift of “belonging.”

We embrace the change that is anticipated in the potential removal of the restrictive language of the Book of Discipline. We celebrate and reaffirm our commitment to the life and work of the United Methodist Church, with its strong worldwide ministries of justice and mercy.

We desire to be a community that fully lives into the grace provided at the open table of communion, and we will seek to be a place where “Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors” is more than a slogan, it is a way of life.

If you would like to speak with the Pastor or any member of the Ad Council about this season in the life of the church and denomination, please reach out at any time.

Further information and resources can be found on our Annual Conference website:

Foundational beliefs: <https://www.gnjumc.org/news/a-call-to-discernment-and-renewal-series-part-2/>

GNJ focus: <https://www.gnjumc.org/news/message-from-bishop-schol-a-call-to-discernment-and-renewal-series-part-1/>