

General Conference Guidance Team and Senior Leadership Team

Joint Recommendation to the McFarlin Administrative Council

January 29, 2023

Considering the postponement of General Conference 2020 until May of 2024, the opening of an alternate Methodist denomination called the Global Methodist Church, and the decisions of some churches to consider disaffiliation and/or to disaffiliate, the McFarlin General Conference Guidance Team (GCGT) and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) **recommends that McFarlin continue to focus on strengthening our unity and connection and on the steady continuance of our vital and robust ministries. We further recommend that we choose to take no formal actions toward either discernment or disaffiliation at least until the completion of General Conference 2020 now scheduled for April 23-May 3, 2024.**

This decision is rooted in and seeks to honor the following realities:

1. the clear Biblical call to mutual Christian love and to the unity of the church,
2. our long history of unity with diversity that continues to prevail,
3. our long-standing connection with the many churches and with shared, necessary systems and opportunities in our conference of the United Methodist Church,
4. our historic doctrine as held in the *Book of Discipline* in perpetuity,
5. our current endeavors and commitments to:
 - a. our Standing on the Promises Missions Center, and historic McFarlin building infrastructure projects,
 - b. our McFarlin Foundation legacy endowments,
 - c. our current vitality and growth in our annual and ongoing Worship, Missions, Discipleship, and Care ministries; and our Evangelism and Just Action ministries, and
6. our 24 months of prayerful, guided, organic or informal discernment conducted by our pastors and the GCGT since its inception in January 2021,

Furthermore, our church and our pastors will continue to abide by the *Book of Discipline of the UMC*. Our pastors and the GCGT will continue, as is deemed necessary and prudent in consultation with the SLT and/or the Administrative Council, to provide clarifying information and opportunities for understanding, especially regarding decisions and developments within our denomination and our Oklahoma Annual Conference.

The questions before the General Conference and related UMC matters engender the need for careful and prayerful crucial conversations that require patience and listening. We encourage small groups such as Sunday School classes and other groups and gatherings to continue being the nurturing community they are as they practice Christ-like love of mutual deference and respect when discussing, to seek clear and reliable information, and to remain transparent with the whole church and our leadership about questions, intentions, desires, etc. Our GCGT will continue to help our church understand what is transpiring in our denomination and will continue to emphasize the reasons why we can remain together and carry out our mission of “Changing Lives that Change the World” together as the UMC General Conference process unfolds.