

September 19, 2022

Dear Friends,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

On Saturday September 17<sup>th</sup>, we held a special called church conference to vote on the matter of disaffiliation from the United Methodist Church. Following the guidelines of the Michigan Conference of the United Methodist Church and the *Book of Discipline*, our Leadership Team presented the motion to the present and voting body of the church conference. Our District Superintendent, Rev. John Hice presided over the meeting as required by the *Discipline*. Additionally, an amendment was approved and added to the disaffiliation vote that would enable the Durand United Methodist Church to disaffiliate and upon disaffiliation, join as a member congregation of the Global Methodist Church. We had 33 people present (with 30 voting members) who voted unanimously (100%) to disaffiliate from the United Methodist Church and subsequently join the Global Methodist Church effective July 1, 2023. The vote required a 2/3 majority (67%) to pass successfully.

## What does this mean?

First of all, Durand First UMC will continue to be a United Methodist congregation until July 1, 2023. Essentially, day to day operations and Sunday worship will see little impact from this change from the UMC to the GMC on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Our vision and mission goals will remain the same, and our leadership structure will continue. Bottom line – Making disciples of Jesus Christ will remain our primary mission. Joining with the mission of the Global Methodist Church to *make disciples of Jesus Christ who worship passionately, love extravagantly, and witness boldly* will shape our ministry teams and outreach efforts in more intentional ways. While we will be required to cease use of the *United Methodist* cross and flame, we remain Methodists devoted to the historic Christian faith as propagated by the Methodist movement throughout the world.

In accordance with ¶2553 in the 2019 *Book of Discipline*, there are costs for disaffiliation. Additionally, the Michigan Conference Trustees have added additional requirements for release of the trust clause (what would allow the congregation of DFUMC to take the building and property to join another denomination). These costs *currently* total \$150,188. While it is *possible* that these costs will decrease, we should be prepared for the full amount. Our Leadership Team is researching options to ease this financial burden and seeking options as we move forward. It is important to note that the final amount is to be paid to the Michigan Conference *prior to the disaffiliation date of July 1, 2023*. The good news is that we don't need it now. The challenge is ensuring we have it when we need it.

## What Happens Next?

The successful disaffiliation vote from Saturday begins a process of gathering information, informing parties, and sets in motion a conversation with the Michigan Conference UMC Trustees. From here, there are two more votes that take place – One

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at the Conference Trustees level in May and another, final vote for approval to disaffiliate during the Michigan Annual Conference June 2-4, 2023. While neither of these votes are “automatic” or “rubber stamp” votes, it is highly unlikely that the votes would not pass at these levels, given that DFUMC completes the requirements appropriately. It is important to note that these votes are necessary to satisfy legal requirements and ensure that integrity is maintained throughout the process. It is likely that we will seek legal counsel in the process of these matters in order to ensure a smooth transition.

I am certain that there will be many more questions that arise as we navigate the next several months together. I invite you to ask me questions at any point, my door is always open. Further, I am aware that not everyone will celebrate this decision and may feel strongly about our trajectory as a church. If you find yourself in this place, please know that I am praying with you and for you. I invite your questions and concerns in this process.

As I have declared intention to join the Global Methodist Church through the transfer of my ordination credentials from the United Methodist Church, I will walk beside you and seek God’s Holy Spirit for discernment and direction in my call to be your pastor. Ultimately, we must be people of prayer in this process and stand with the utmost of integrity and character. As a current ordained elder in the UMC, I will continue to be faithful to that calling. When I make the final transition to the GMC, I will be faithful in my calling there. While there are changes on the horizon, I know that God is already there, preparing a place where our ministry together will flourish, and people will come to know Jesus as Lord and Savior. Keep praying, friends. Keep loving one another. Together, let’s make much of Jesus.

Yours in Christ,

*Pastor Aaron*

*For more information on the Global Methodist Church, visit [www.globalmethodist.org](http://www.globalmethodist.org)*

*For information on the Michigan Conference Disaffiliation Process, visit <https://michiganumc.org/resources-old/local-church/trustees/disaffiliation/>*