

## Introduction

In recent months our congregation has been moving through a time of discernment regarding denominational issues related to human sexuality. In 2019 the General Conference adopted a provision to the Book of Discipline that allows a path for local churches to disaffiliate from the United Methodist Church while maintaining ownership of their property. Under this provision, churches may only disaffiliate “for reasons of conscience... related to the practice of homosexuality or the ordination or marriage of self-avowed practicing homosexuals.”

The steps for disaffiliation in the North Georgia Conference can be found here:

<https://www.ngumc.org/files/fileslibrary/administrationtreasurer/ngumc+disaffiliation+process.pdf>

More information on the disaffiliation process can be found here:

<https://www.ngumc.org/disaffiliation-process-and-information>

The following document was developed by a committee of church leaders in an effort to educate our congregation on what the practical implications of disaffiliation may be. It is not intended to provide arguments for or against disaffiliation, but to answer questions about what disaffiliation might look like for Tucker First UMC.

Our hope is that each of you will spend time in prayer on this matter. James 1:5 says “But anyone who needs wisdom should ask God, whose very nature is to give to everyone without a second thought, without keeping score. Wisdom will certainly be given to those who ask.” Let us ask for God’s wisdom to guide us during this time of faithful discernment.

Sincerely,

Leigh Andersen

Joe Kilpatrick

Nick Frutiger

Rob Bloomquist

Rev. Gerald Varner

Rev. Anne Cumings

## Denominational Affiliation Information Document

If TFUMC remains United Methodist...	If TFUMC disaffiliates from the UMC...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pastors will be appointed by the Bishop in consultation with the cabinet and local church leadership. It is in the best interest of the Annual Conference to make clergy appointments that align with the views of church membership and that will allow for both churches and clergy to thrive.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The new Tucker local church<sup>1</sup> will freely recruit and hire their own pastors or join another denomination and enter their pastoral appointment process. In either situation, efforts will be made to make clergy appointments that align with the views of church membership and that will allow for both churches and clergy to thrive.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will not have to pay the lump sum costs to the Annual Conference that are associated with disaffiliation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As of 10/6/22, we will pay to the Annual Conference \$180,379 in apportionments for 2022 and 2023 and \$37,398.92 in unfunded pension liability to disaffiliate. There will also be costs to reincorporate and rebrand the church.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will continue to pay annual apportionments to the UMC. Our apportionments are set at \$89,178.00 for 2023.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will no longer pay apportionments to the UMC. Our apportionments are set at \$89,178.00 for 2023. As an independent church, we would remain apportionment free. If we decide to join another denomination we would pay costs associated with that membership, which is expected to be less than our current apportionments.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will remain part of a connection through which our apportionments help to provide support for collective ministry and mission. We will continue to engage in ministry through boards and agencies such as the United Methodist Commission on Relief (UMCOR), Wellroot,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The new Tucker church will continue to operate as an Acts 1:8 church, providing support and ministry through most, if not all, of the missions programs TFUMC is currently engaged in. We independently support many missions activities and will continue our local</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Post disaffiliation, the newly incorporated church will choose for itself a new name. For the purposes of this document we will refer to it as “new Tucker church.” The significant possibilities for future affiliations include “Methodists” in the title, i.e. Global Methodist, Wesleyan Methodist, Free Methodist, etc.

<p>camp ministries, UMC colleges and seminaries etc. We will remain an Acts 1:8 church and continue our local (Networks), national (ASP, etc.), and international (Honduras and Africa) missions.</p>	<p>(Networks), national (ASP, etc.), and international (Honduras and Africa) missions.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our property will remain under the trust clause.<sup>2</sup> If TFUMC were to close, the property returns to the conference board of trustees to either be repurposed for ministry or sold with the proceeds deposited in a conference fund used for church development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new Tucker church would be released from the trust clause<sup>1</sup> and would own their property outright. If the new Tucker church were to close, the property would be dealt with and managed by the local church leadership. With the provisions of 2553 expiring at the end of 2023 there is no guarantee that TFUMC would still have the freedom to disaffiliate after that date and retain their property.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will continue to uphold the UMC Articles of Religion that affirm belief in the Holy Trinity, the divinity of Jesus Christ, the resurrection of Christ, the sufficiency of the holy scriptures for salvation, the sinfulness of humanity and our need for salvation. These articles cannot be changed by any action of General Conference and will remain the core doctrine of the UMC. The Articles of Religion can be found here: <a href="https://www.umc.org/en/content/articles-of-religion">https://www.umc.org/en/content/articles-of-religion</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new Tucker church will continue to uphold the values and principles in the UMC Articles of Religion that affirm belief in the Holy Trinity, the divinity of Jesus Christ, the resurrection of Christ, the sufficiency of the holy scriptures for salvation, the sinfulness of humanity and our need for salvation.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TFUMC will continue to operate under the policies, procedures and organizational structures of the UMC. Work for greater efficiency and effectiveness will continue to take place within the denomination.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new Tucker church will disaffiliate from the UMC, but not immediately affiliate with any other existing Methodist denomination. The new church will be free to seek partnerships and accountability with other like-hearted churches and will have the opportunity to seek more efficient systems and structures outside the UMC.</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> The trust clause means that we hold the property, in trust, for the benefit of the annual conference. The trust clause was established by John Wesley in the 1700s. Its intent is to ensure that United Methodist local church property will continue to be used for United Methodist Church purposes.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Book of Discipline does not currently allow for marrying or ordaining of practicing homosexual individuals within the UMC, although the possibility for change exists.</li> </ul> <p>Currently, some UMC conferences and jurisdictions are openly violating their vow to accept the authority of the Book of Discipline as an act of civil disobedience of what they believe are unjust policies. Work for greater inclusion and accountability will take place within the denomination.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new Tucker church, as an independent congregation, will not allow marriage of gay people or affirm the ordination of gay pastors. The church could also join a denomination that will not allow for the ordination and marriage of gay people.</li> </ul> <p>The new church will seek structures that provide more accountability for church leadership in regards to church policy and doctrine regarding homosexual practices.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TFUMC will remain a part of the UMC which is home to Christians with a diversity of theological opinions and scriptural interpretations. It will continue to provide a home for traditionalists, centrists and progressives.<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new Tucker church will be a church with primarily a traditionalist viewpoint. Centrists and progressives will be welcomed as members.<sup>3</sup> Members at TFUMC would no longer be members of the UMC and would be welcomed as members of the new Tucker church.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TFUMC will retain the use of the “cross and flame” logo and the use of UMC hymnals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new Tucker church would choose a new logo and purchase new hymnals and choose from among modern and classical worship styles.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TFUMC will retain ownership of our historical documents and archives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The historical documents of TFUMC will remain the property of the United Methodist Church and will be deposited in the archives at Pitts Theological Library at Candler School of Theology – Emory University.</li> </ul>

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<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of the discussion on disaffiliation: Traditionalist refers to the view that marriage and ordination of practicing gay people is incompatible with Christian teaching. Centrist refers to the view that the center of Christian faith is Jesus Christ, and outside of that center, there is room for diversity of thought on issues of ordination and marriage. Progressive refers to the view that the marriage or ordination of practicing gay people is compatible with Christian teaching.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lay leadership, organization, committees, and paid staff will continue under UMC rules and guidelines.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new Tucker church will seek an effective organizational framework for its lay leadership and staff operations, and its operations would remain functionally the same. Participation in Sunday Schools, choirs, women’s ministries, and men’s ministries would remain unchanged.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TFUMC will proceed to appeal to Tucker’s diverse and cosmopolitan community, projecting a non-judgmental love for all, embracing gay, straight, young, old, rich, and poor with God’s message of love for neighbor.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new Tucker church will appeal to the Tucker community by preaching and programs that promote a traditionalist view of human sexuality. Numbers show that non-denominational congregations have been effective with a traditionalist model.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditionalist, centrist and progressive interpretations of scripture on the practice of homosexuality and marriage of same gender persons will continue to be respected at TFUMC.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new Tucker church will uphold an interpretation of scripture that does not allow for same-gender marriage, ordination of practicing gay people, or homosexual practices.</li> </ul>