

# Denominational Discernment

## Letter of Recommendation

March 19, 2023

The Discernment Advisory Committee recommends that the Administrative Board hold a vote on disaffiliation from the UMC as outlined by the Rio Texas Conference Discerning Pathways Document. The date of this vote has been previously scheduled by the Conference for May 21, 2023, at 4:00 p.m. in the event of a potential decision to hold a vote.

Hours of prayer, listening, reflection, and consideration leave us with the conviction that the membership of University ought to be given the opportunity to collectively express their perspective on the current state of our connection and the most faithful path forward.

Please see the accompanying Discernment Covenant, Presenting Issues and FAQ documents that expand on our reasoning and map out the journey thus far. University is a community welcome to everyone. We are and remain committed to any and all persons to join us in growing as disciples of Christ.

While issues surrounding sexuality and gender are often the lone or loudest issues raised in our current denominational unrest, the committee firmly believes that the primary issues of concern are ones of church structure, function, and purpose. The presenting issue of human sexuality has created an environment within the denomination that is unpredictable and unstable. We know that for many this has been a painful and trying time. We grieve that anyone would be made to feel less than, unwelcome, or unloved by God.

This volatility introduced by the denomination directly affects University's witness and work. We are likewise impaired by the denomination's failure to marshal and direct resources towards Kingdom outcomes.

We are grateful for Bishop Schnase and the Rio Texas Conference, and their commitment to support University as, together, we continue to seek God's will for our congregation. As part of that commitment we invite the congregation to join us in 60 days of prayer and preparation for our time together on May 21<sup>st</sup>. God has been faithful in His provision for University. We enter into this recommendation with confidence and trust in the Lord. We believe that God will continue to lead us through this journey; we are not alone and we are not lost.

We would not recommend to the Board to hold a vote of disaffiliation if we did not believe it was in the best interest of our mission and membership to disaffiliate from the current state of the UMC. We make this recommendation through tears and heavy hearts. We confess that our hope still outpaces our grief and pain and pray that we are captured by a Spirit led call to renewal and reform, both individually and collectively.

3/19/2023