

Conversation Starters

For Laity Whose Churches Are in the Discernment Process

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Don't disparage the Global Methodist Church (GMC) or anyone who wants to join it.
- Start by giving them the floor, asking them their opinions. Really listen.
- Share a reason you're feeling called to remain in the UMC.
- Share a question you have about the GMC.
- Ask them what wonderings they have.
- Tell them you'll be praying for God's Holy Spirit to lead the church, as you're sure they are.

Possible Reasons for Not Going into the GMC

You made a covenant to serve God in the UMC.
One could argue: yes, but others have broken the covenant. In response: two wrongs don't make a right.

The UMC is your spiritual home and has many good qualities you're not ready to give up.

The UMC is already a global church, collaboratively working around the world in missions, disaster relief, education, and much more.

You're concerned about the church's ability to bring new folks to Christ if you become a part of a church perceived to be purposefully exclusionary.

You're concerned about how many church members may leave.

You value being a part of a church where all perspectives are welcome.

Missions like UM ARMY and UMCOR are important to you.

You are affirming of LGBTQ people and their families.

You are not sure you're affirming of LGBTQ people, but you're more comfortable erring on the side of grace than judgment.

The GMC has not had its convening conference yet, so you don't know what you'll be getting.

There are too many unanswered questions.

You don't know what it would mean for church finances.

You don't know what it would mean for how your church would appoint future pastors.

Disobedience to the *Book of Discipline* in other states/ annual conferences does not greatly affect your local church's ministry or calling.

Possible Questions About the GMC

How do you think our approach to the gospel will change in a new denomination? In preaching? In Sunday School resources?

Do you believe this is an issue worth dividing the church over?

Will everyone in my family or friend circles feel welcome in a GMC church?

Do we believe we're going to reach more people for Christ by moving into the GMC?

How will differences of opinion be handled?

If we no longer have UM ARMY or UMCOR, what alternatives will we create?

If the child of a same-sex couple comes forward for baptism or confirmation, will they be able to get baptized or confirmed in the GMC?

Do you think we'll be more faithful Christians as members of the GMC?

Why would we go into the GMC before we know what its doctrine, structure, finances, congregational support, or size will be?

Who will be in charge of the GMC?

Since in the GMC, a church can be removed for not paying apportionments after 1 year, are we confident we'll always be able to pay apportionments in full?

Is my pastor okay losing 7% of his or her pension to leave the UMC pension plan?

There will be no guaranteed appointments in the GMC and it is unclear that a bishop will be able to tell a pastor where to serve. How will our church attract a pastor? What will our plan be if we can't find one?