



## An Update from McFarlin's General Conference Guidance Team

McFarlin family,

It was announced officially on March 3 that the General (worldwide) Conference of the United Methodist Church previously scheduled for August 29–September 6, 2022 has been postponed to sometime in 2024—likely September 2024.

**Essential Point: Nothing has changed except the date of General Conference. McFarlin remains focused on strengthening our connection and unity for the vitality and longevity of our mission in Norman. We remain focused on inspiring worship, faith-forming discipleship, effective missions ministries, loving care and making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Last Sunday, March 6, Pastor Rockford taught our 8th grade students in Confirmation class. Gathered were 28 of the 33 who are enrolled. They engaged in learning about the justifying, pardoning, healing and claiming grace of God, preparing them to make professions of faith in Jesus Christ. What a joy!**

Our McFarlin “General Conference Guidance Team (GCGT)” met Sunday afternoon, March 6, to review the news and any implications. The postponement changes nothing except to extend the time until the UMC makes a final decision about the questions related to allowing same-sex weddings and the ordaining of openly practicing gay clergy. In response to the postponement, a group of churches and pastors known as the "Global Methodist Church (GMC)" has announced that on May 1, 2022 they will formally open an alternate denomination.

Again, this development changes nothing except to formalize something that has been in the works for some time. However, it is not fully or precisely clear what the rules, governance and leadership of the alternative GMC denomination will be. It will remain “in transition” a year and a half or so. The official statement from their website is: “For approximately 12 to 18 months, the Global Methodist Church will be a church in transition as it prepares for its convening General Conference. During the transitional period, the Global Methodist Church will operate under the Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline.”

**419 S. University at Apache, P.O. Box 6390 Norman, OK 73070-6390**

**phone 405.321.3484 • fax 405.321.3498**

**[www.mcfarlinumc.org](http://www.mcfarlinumc.org)**

To be clear, it is still too early to know precisely what the stipulated options for local churches and their attendant details might be. We do know of two Oklahoma UM churches that intend to leave the UMC to join an alternate denomination. There may be others. Like McFarlin, however, most of the Oklahoma churches are focused on their local mission and awaiting developments.

**Now is the time for McFarlin to remain focused on our mission and our unity so that we maintain and strengthen all our effective ministries; enjoy our worship, relationships, ministries and life together; and do all we can to extend the vitality and longevity of our mission in Norman and beyond.**

The world is hurting as people are dying and fleeing war in Ukraine and there is much ministry to do right here in Norman. Although we do not all think exactly alike, we do share a love of God, love for each other and others, and faithfulness to the way of Jesus. We worship, study, and do ministry well and joyfully together. The response and feedback in our recent GCGT sessions and in our recent “Standing on the Promises” gatherings has been largely positive and affirming of McFarlin’s future together.

Our GCGT will continue to monitor closely any developments and communications with regards to both the General Conference and the Oklahoma Annual Conference. We remain committed to knowing all we can know and to sharing what we know with our congregation. Our GCGT will continue to pray, discern, listen, gather information and collaborate with the McFarlin Senior Leadership Team and our Administrative Council. We remain open to your inquiries. We covet your prayers. We trust God. You can find the full text of the United Methodist Church General Conference postponement announcement and letter from our Bishop, Jimmy Nunn, at our General Conference webpage: [mcfarlinumc.org/about/general-conference](http://mcfarlinumc.org/about/general-conference)

If you have questions or feedback, there will be two Question & Answer opportunities in the sanctuary on Sunday, March 13 immediately following our worship services, or please contact one of our pastors or one of the co-chairs of the General Conference Guidance Team—Karen Hill and Chris Gentry.