

## **MAINSTREAM UMC:**

### **CAMPAIGN TO SUPPORT THE BISHOPS**

---

#### **CRITICAL MISSION**

The United Methodist Church is the closest it has been to fracture since the Civil War. We have engaged in forty years of contentious struggle around human sexuality with no resolution. The 2016 General Conference voted for a new path. The Conference voted to table all legislation related to human sexuality and asked the Council of Bishops to come up with a plan. The Bishops agreed and engaged in an unprecedented two year, global discernment process. They formed The Way Forward Commission and received their three proposals. Nearly 2/3 of the Bishops have now recommended the One Church Plan for approval to the 2019 Special Session of the General Conference in St. Louis. This carefully discerned resolution is the best path forward for the church.

Mainstream UMC has formed to fund, staff, and organize a global campaign to pass the Bishops' proposal and to prepare contingency plans leading up to the 2020 General conference. Multiple established advocacy groups, including Good News, Confessing Movement, Wesleyan Covenant Association, and the Institute for Religion and Democracy, are actively organizing and raising money to defeat the One Church Plan. They have all publicly pledged to bring counter petitions. If we do not get behind the Bishops' well considered proposal, we will be left with a proposal from the margins that is sure to divide the church further. Mainstream UMC represents a broad coalition, both left and right of center. We believe the vast majority of United Methodists want the church to stay together and learn to live with our differences.

The vote in February 2019 will stand in history with the votes of 1844, 1939, and 1964. We will vote to unite or we will vote to divide. With your help we can work together to make sure we vote for unity. The Bishops have prayerfully discerned a Way Forward. Let us join together to help make Christ's vision of One Church become a reality.

#### **WHY A CAMPAIGN?**

The structure of the United Methodist Church was modeled after the newly formed United States Government. We have three branches, Executive (Council of Bishops), Legislative (General Conference), and Judicial (Judicial Council). The magisterial authority of the church is in the General Conference, which is a legislative body. This means that the decision on the future of the church will be by the vote of the 854 delegates. This is an inherently political process. To win a desired outcome in a political process requires a campaign.

The campaign is in addition to dialogue. There still needs to be much dialogue leading up to the Special Session of the General Conference in February of 2019. But no amount of dialogue in the months before February 2019 is going to improve the extensive time, deliberation, and scope of the discernment done by The Commission on the Way Forward and the Council of Bishops. Our best and brightest leaders have worked for two years and with a nearly 2/3 majority agree that the One Church Plan is the best hope for the church.

The Council of Bishops is not going to campaign for their plan. There is currently no organization that is raising money and staffing a campaign to support the Bishops. There needs to be a sense of urgency that a generation-defining vote will take place in our church in February 2019. The Bishops' plan is the only path forward.

## **PLAN**

The plan is to create an organization, Mainstream UMC, and to hire a full-time President for one year, from July 1, 2018 to July 1, 2019 to strategically identify the necessary votes (consensus would be better than a simple majority) of General Conference Delegates to support the Bishops' vision. The primary work is to identify which delegates are strongly in favor of the Bishops' plan, which ones are strongly against it, and which ones are undecided. Then build support around those in favor and work to persuade the undecided. This will include building a communication plan and regional infrastructure to support the Bishops across the diverse constituencies of the church.

Mainstream UMC needs to create a strong, strategic, and nimble campaign infrastructure in order to move the Bishop's vision forward. The Wesleyan Covenant Association has a significant organizational edge, particularly with the support of other, long-standing advocacy groups, including Good News, The Confessing Movement, and the Institute for Religion and Democracy. These groups have been actively advocating within the denomination for several years and are ramping up a campaign to increase punitive measures and ultimately split the church. There is no need to build the kind of permanent organization these groups have, but there is a need to match their campaign headed into General Conference.

Mainstream UMC will have a broad Advisory Board to gather feedback and give input. This group needs to be global, just like the church. This group will primarily connect through email and social media and will be the eyes and ears of the organization. In addition, there will be eight to twelve trusted thought leaders to serve as the "Campaign Cabinet." The President will work directly with this group to shape messaging and confer on strategic direction. The Campaign Cabinet will receive input from the larger group and funnel it into the decision making process. This will keep the campaign rooted in the larger movement and nimble enough to move quickly and effectively.

The Campaign Cabinet would work on contingency plans leading up to the General Conference in 2019, continuously vetting these through the larger organization. Following the vote in St. Louis, the campaign would work strategically to prepare for annual conferences in the Spring of 2019. This would prepare for delegate elections and petitions heading into the General Conference of 2020.

The President will spearhead fundraising to support the salary and outreach efforts leading up to the February General Conference in 2019 and to support Annual Conference decision-making and delegate selection in the spring and summer of 2019. The Campaign Cabinet and larger group would assist the fundraising efforts by providing lists of supportive individuals and congregations, and in some cases make calls to request funds.

## CHALLENGES

1. The broad center of the denomination is not accustomed to organizing. Most advocacy comes from the edges of the church. The broad center typically listens, evaluates, and then moves with slow deliberate action. At this time, the broad center offers the best hope for the United Methodist Church to navigate the calls for split and division. Organizing now and standing proactively with the Bishops is essential.
2. The Good News Magazine lists 11 staff members. The Institute for Religion and Democracy lists 9 staff members. The Confessing Movement Newsletter lists 5 staff members. The Wesleyan Covenant Association lists 2, but does not list any support staff. All four of these organizations are putting their full funding and staffing to defeat the Bishops plan. Right now the Mainstream of the UMC is out-staffed 27-0. This is not a winning formula.
3. It is difficult to organize for consensus internationally. All UM materials and meetings need to be translated into multiple languages. That alone makes the process more challenging and deliberate. In addition, the vast majority of delegates outside the United States do not have Internet access and email. This makes the high speed, direct communication that we expect in the U.S. impossible. Often communication needs to go through the Episcopal offices, which takes more time and can come with a filter. These challenges need to be addressed strategically and with a sense of urgency prior to the Special Session of the General Conference in February of 2019. Writing off the international delegates would not only be disrespectful, but would be a huge strategic error.
4. The delays in releasing the Bishops' report has further hampered organization. It is difficult to support a document we have not been able to read in its entirety. Annual Conferences in the United States and Central Conferences have already met. This makes it difficult, though not impossible, to ascertain the level of support for the Bishops at the conference level. This work needs to be undertaken to provide a clear picture of support going into the Special Session in February of 2019.
5. General Conference is not built for consensus, it is built for majority.
  - a. There is very little meaningful dialogue. There is caucusing, debate, and voting governed by parliamentary procedure.
  - b. There is a great deal of effort by some to manipulate the body with technical aspects of Robert's Rules of Order. Planned motions to substitute, limit discussion, table, reconsider, etc. all serve to frustrate and confuse the body.
  - c. The process ultimately rewards political strategy over holy conferencing. Both of these must take place well before delegates arrive in St. Louis.
6. General Conference's electronic votes do not yield valuable data. The Bishops' recommendation may or may not pass and the voting data will show numbers only, not who supported it and who did not. The work of discovering supporters must be done ahead of time, because after the vote there will only be a few months before the 2019 Annual Conferences begin to prepare for the 2020 General Conference.

7. This General Conference will be unique and no one should assume old alliances will hold. Strategic organizing is essential to understand where everyone stands.
  - a. It is unprecedented that the Council of Bishops will make a recommendation. There is an opportunity to build a coalition of delegates who are willing to support the Bishops' call for unity despite otherwise deep theological differences.
  - b. The fundamental structure of the church really is at risk, and some may vote for preservation rather than risk the unknown outcomes of fracturing.
  - c. Some delegates may vote against the Council of Bishop's recommendation based on hearing only one side ahead of time. It is critical that all sides are presented.
  - d. Some may vote against the recommendation because it goes too far.
  - e. Some may vote against the recommendation because it does not go far enough.
  - f. Any strategic organizing in favor of the Bishops' plan will only come from outside of the Council of Bishops itself.
8. Change is coming. If anything is clear, a large group of United Methodists will disagree with whatever happens in St. Louis. It is conceivable that the U.S. delegates will support the Bishops 80 percent to 20 percent and the proposal still not pass in February. The organizing work needs to include contingency planning for a wide variety of outcomes.
9. The time between February 2019 and the Annual Conferences convening later that spring and summer will be a very short and a very important time. There will be only a few weeks after the Special Session to plan for petitions and the election of delegates for the 2020 General Conference. Waiting to see the outcome of the vote, without strategic contingency plans, could lead to greater fracturing. Building organizing infrastructure, consensus, and contingency plans now with the broad center will be a significant asset going into General Conference 2020.

## **CAMPAIGN PHASE I: JULY 1 TO OCTOBER 1, 2018**

### **Deliverables:**

- 1) Work with Advisory Board to identify and recommend the Campaign Cabinet of 8 to 12 individuals.
- 2) Work with Cabinet to identify collegial contacts within both partner and opposing organizations. Staying in regular, collegial contact for the next 8 months is very important, particularly if there are negotiations at General Conference.
- 3) Work with Campaign Cabinet to develop a budget for the ongoing work of the campaign.
- 4) Develop a survey tool to test messaging.
  - a. Because United Methodists are a diverse group, different language or emphasis will resonate differently with different groups.
  - b. We want segmented messaging for those who are left-leaning and those who are right-leaning.
  - c. It will also be interesting to test lay and clergy perspectives.



- d. We also must learn messaging that speaks to a very diverse international constituency.
- 5) Develop a global campaign focus and strategy. Ultimately, we just need to reach delegates, but they must feel swept up in a larger movement for unity. This vote will take courage. We need to "encourage" the delegates by energizing the broader church.
  - a. How to reach the UM's in the pews (social media)
  - b. How to reach congregations (web presence)
  - c. How to reach annual conferences (conference captains)
  - d. How to reach individual delegates (direct mail, email, phone banking)
- 6) Prepare a fundraising strategy to raise \$110,000 to fund Phase II of the Campaign
  - a. Develop campaign materials for mail and/or email to put something in donors' hands.
  - b. Communicate with the 20 or 30 key figures identified by Cabinet.
  - c. Evaluate the balance between distracting fundraising and an opportunity for buy in. Fundraising often provides a lift to a campaign message. People often want to "do something" and giving is something they can "do."
- 7) Develop communications team
  - a. Identify website team to get up and running and stay current
  - b. Identify Social Media volunteers to watch what is out there and to push our message far and wide

#### **BUDGET AND FISCAL AGENT**

The initial startup budget for Phase I is \$60,000. This will fund staff and program for 90 days and allow for the development of campaign infrastructure and a fundraising plan for the Phase II, the implementation phase. It will also facilitate the President to attend three key events in July, listed below.

Grace UMC in Olathe, Kansas has agreed to host Mainstream UMC, serve as the fiscal agent, and provide financial accountability. Please send your tax deductible contributions to:

Please make checks payable to:

Grace United Methodist Church  
Memo: Mainstream UMC  
11485 S. Ridgeview Road  
Olathe, Kansas 66061

For more information, contact Mark Holland, [mholland@greatplainsumc.org](mailto:mholland@greatplainsumc.org) 913-299-3569

#### **Travel:**

- 1) Nashville. Dialogue around One Church Plan. All costs covered by organizers.
- 2) Dallas. Uniting Methodists Gathering. One way airfare, Dallas to KC (the Nashville group is flying me to Dallas). Hotel, ground transportation, and \$70 per diem.
- 3) St. Louis. Reconciling Ministries Network. Mileage (too close to fly), hotel, \$70 per diem.

## **MARK HOLLAND BIO**

Rev. Dr. Mark R. Holland is a third generation United Methodist pastor, notably, with three generations in three different denominational structures: M.E. South, M.E., and U.M.C. Mark has served in the Kansas East/Great Plains Conferences since 1994. June 30, 2018, he completed his service as the Senior Pastor of Trinity Community Church, a United Methodist Congregation in Kansas City, Kansas where he served for 19 years.

Mark has demonstrated leadership in consensus building within the United Methodist Church. He has served as an alternate or delegate to each South Central Jurisdictional Conference and each General Conference since 2000. At the 2016 General Conference, in the midst of another bitter division around human sexuality, Mark made the motion on the floor asking the Council of Bishops to come back with a plan to build consensus in the church. That plan has become The One Church Model.

Mark has demonstrated leadership in consensus building within his diverse community and congregation. He served six years as an elected Commissioner and four years as the elected Mayor/CEO of the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas. This is a city of 165,000 residents and one of the most diverse municipalities in the country. The community is 42 percent white, 28 percent Latino/a, and 26 percent African American and has tremendous socio-economic challenges. While in office he received numerous awards and recognitions, including:

- 2018 University of Missouri Kansas City, Cookingham Institute Public Service Award for work with homeless students in Kansas City, Kansas
- 2017 KC Business Journal: Inaugural Class of Kansas City's Power 100
- Ingram's Magazine 250 most influential leadership figures in the Kansas City region 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017
- 2017 Consensus Kansas City Civility Award for work with violence prevention.
- 2017 More2, Equity Partner of the Year
- 2017 Greater Kansas City YMCA, Transformer Award
- 2016 Kansas Public Health Association Policy Maker of the Year Award
- 2016 Adam J. Hamilton Vision and Leadership Award from Saint Paul School of Theology
- 2015 Kansas African-American Commission-District 3, Community Service Award
- 2014 Wyandotte Homeless Services Coalition, Community Service Award
- 2009 Honorable Emanuel Cleaver, II Public Service Award

Mark graduated with a BA and a BS from Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. He has an MDiv from Iliff School of Theology. He has a DMin from Saint Paul School of Theology in Kansas City, Missouri. He and Julie, his wife of 21 years, have four children, Daniel, Gabriel, Luke, and Esther.

Mark is passionate about the church and very experienced in leading good process through complex, highly charged issues. He is in a unique situation, taking a year off mid-career from local church ministry. This gives him the opportunity to work with Mainstream UMC full time to build consensus in our denomination. This work combines Mark's passion for the United Methodist church with his strategic organizational skills.

# MAINSTREAM UMC:

## CAMPAIGN TO SUPPORT THE BISHOPS

### FINANCIAL REALITY

The Wesleyan Covenant Association, The Good News, The Confessing Movement, and the Institute for Religion and Democracy combine to raise millions of dollars a year and employ over 27 staff members. They have all publically committed to defeating the Bishops' One Church Plan and are bringing alternative proposals to General Conference.

We do not need to match their funding or staffing. We do believe it will take at least \$250,000 to launch a global campaign to pass the Bishop's proposal. We also believe that there are at least 100 congregations who could give \$2,500 each, either from existing church funds or members who are passionate about this to support the Bishops. Considering the scope and scale of the broad center of the Church, this is a very reachable goal.

### PLEDGE OF SUPPORT

☐ Yes, I want to support the Bishops through Mainstream UMC!

☐ Clergy ☐ Layperson

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Church: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Foundation Member: \$10,000

☐ Pillar Member: \$5,000

☐ Supporting Member: \$2,500

☐ Steeple Member: \$1,000

☐ Enabling Members: Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

The fiscal agent is Grace United Methodist Church in Olathe Kansas. They will provide administrative accountability for income and expenditures and office infrastructure support.

Please make checks payable to:

Grace United Methodist Church  
Memo: Mainstream UMC  
11485 S. Ridgeview Road  
Olathe, Kansas 66061

For more information, contact Mark Holland, [mholland@greatplainsumc.org](mailto:mholland@greatplainsumc.org) 913-299-3569