

Resources and References

Regarding the Separation Happening in the United Methodist Church

The purpose of this resource guide is to provide links to sources of information so that members of the Asbury United Methodist Church can be knowledgeable about the issues that are driving a separation in the United Methodist denomination. A major factor is how the church should minister to and with persons who have different perspectives on human sexuality. This resource includes information about the disaffiliation process that some congregations are using to separate from the United Methodist denomination.

We recognize and expect that members of the Asbury Church will have differing views on these issues. However, our hope and challenge is to provide a safe place for people to be honest, open and respectful of others. Our society today is in desperate need of positive examples of people who can respect each other while having different viewpoints and resolve to live together in a supportive way.

Our plan is to have an **all Church Conference at 6:30pm on Monday, December 12**. At that meeting we will celebrate our progress over the past year, share a pastor's report on the State of the Church and set the general direction for the future. During that Church Conference anyone could make a motion to call for a formal vote on disaffiliation. If a motion is made and approved by a simple majority, then the church would prepare for a formal vote at some time in the first quarter of 2023.

Prayer will be the foundation upon which we seek God's light in this area so that we can more effectively share God's love and attempt to do God's will.

*Prepared by Pastor Tom Carver
Asbury United Methodist Church, Bettendorf, Iowa
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Definitions

Local Church.

Includes church members, elected leaders and pastors.

Trust Clause in ¶ 2501.1 of the Book of Discipline states that a Local Church holds its real and personal, tangible and intangible property "in trust" for The United Methodist Church and subject to the provisions of its Discipline."

Annual Conference. Meets annually and led by a Bishop.

Members are pastors and elected lay persons from every congregation in a geographic area. Asbury is a part of the Iowa Annual Conference.

Pastors are appointed to local churches by the Bishop of an Annual Conference (with the assistance of a Cabinet of District Superintendents).

Financial *apportionments* are paid to the Annual Conference.

General Conference. Meets every 4 years.

Highest level of authority within the United Methodist Church.

Delegates are elected from Annual Conferences around the world.

It alone determines the content of the **Book of Discipline** which is a statement of doctrine, structure and practice.

Timeline of events:

1972: Language first added to the Book of Discipline saying that *“the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching.”* The question of how to minister to people with different understandings of human sexuality has been a topic in every subsequent General Conference.

2016: General Conference in Minneapolis: There was a call for a Special General Conference to deal exclusively with human sexuality. It was scheduled for 2019.

2019: The special General Conference in St Louis passed the “Traditional Plan” strengthening bans on LGBTQ inclusion by a vote of 438-384. (The difference of 54 votes was a 53% to 47% majority.) A majority of members from the US favored a more flexible plan, but the international delegations were more uniformly in favor of the Traditional Plan. This General Conference added a provision in the Book of Discipline that provided a way for local churches to disaffiliate from the United Methodist Church. Par. 2553 outlines the requirements which include a financial settlement with their Annual Conference and vote by the local church with a 2/3rds majority approval. This provision was set to expire on December 31, 2023. .

January 2020: An ad hoc group representing various factions developed a *“Protocol of Reconciliation & Grace Through Separation”* that was announced in January 2020. It appeared to have widespread acceptance and was to be presented to the General Conference in 2020.

2020: General Conference postponed due to COVID.

2021: General Conference was postponed again.

December of 2021: the Cabinet of the Iowa Annual Conference offered a statement called *Leading Now and Into the Future*. It said that the Cabinet will not process complaints against pastors or churches that perform same sex unions. A process for Disaffiliation was also offered to local congregations. It would require a 2/3rds majority vote of the congregation and a payment to the denomination for pension liabilities in order to legally transfer property titles to the local congregation.

Spring of 2022: Citing international travel challenges the General Conference was delayed until the next regularly scheduled Conference in 2024.

May, 2022: Not wanting to wait until the 2024 General Conference, the Global Methodist Church was formed as a new denomination.

November 18, 2023: A special session of the Iowa Annual Conference will convene to release any churches who have completed the process to disaffiliate.

December 31, 2023: The process to disaffiliate will expire.

Summer of 2024: General Conference will meet.

Links and References

The current relevant statements in the 2016 United Methodist Book of Discipline.

¶ 304.3: The practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching. Therefore self-avowed practicing homosexuals are not to be certified as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church.

¶ 341.6: Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches.

Trust Clause in ¶ 2501.1 of the Book of Discipline.

“All properties of United Methodist local churches and other United Methodist agencies and institutions are held, in trust, for the benefit of the entire denomination, and ownership and usage of church property is subject to the Discipline.”

<https://www.umc.org/en/content/book-of-discipline-2501-requirement-of-trust-clause>

Book of Discipline Paragraphs 2548.2 & 2553 relating to disaffiliation.

<https://www.ctcumc.org/discipline-disaffiliation-paragraphs>

Leading Now and Into the Future, statement from the Iowa Cabinet. December 3, 2021.

<https://www.iaumc.org/leading-now>

*“As we lead now into the future, we desire to equip local congregations to do the ministry God is calling them to do. No one will be compelled or required to act contrary to their convictions, understanding of scripture, or conscience. Likewise, no one will be prevented from doing the ministry God is calling them to offer. **To put it clearly, pastors will be able to choose which weddings they officiate, as long as it is two consenting adults who have been counseled. Likewise, church leadership, in consultation with their pastors, will be able to determine their own policy regarding weddings.**”*

United Methodist Church website:

<https://www.umc.org/en>

Global Methodist Church website.

<https://globalmethodist.org/>

Lewis Center for Church Leadership video.

Brief review of the current church dilemma and options for the future.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QOEG4LK-J5c&t=1s>

Bishop Scott Jones (Central Texas) offers a helpful and full explanation to a local congregation:

<https://youtu.be/pdYtHOTvI3I>

United Methodist Insight, an independent news publication for United Methodists.

<https://um-insight.net/>

Adam Hamilton is pastor of the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection (<https://cor.org/>).

Explanation of why his church will stay with the United Methodist Church:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z1unw5LwdiQ> 43:53

Global Methodist Church videos featuring Rob Renfroe.	Adam Hamilton Responds to the Rob Renfroe Videos
1. The United Methodist Church is Divided and Dividing https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5g48onYSgg0 11:52	1. Why UMC?_ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=62qtzyBVCv8 10:46
2. Our Differences Regarding the Bible https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P35XdF873NQ 15:16	2. Love of Scripture_ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=us12L0Tsw_c 13:57
3. Our Differences Regarding Jesus_ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fNpmGxE8D88 16:26	3. Committed to Christ_ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fK7-cTdawU 5:59
4. Our Differences Regarding Sexuality https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FjOdfOgAJI 16:01	4. Human Sexuality_ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y10Keo9h5E8 18:44
5. Why It's Time for Traditionalists to Leave https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fw5Y4fMRJtQ 13:49	5. A Future with Hope_ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wbNchQ-V4GE 12:30
6. Where Should We Go?_ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wzAVdE9wqY0 14:12	6. Moving Forward with the UMC https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hlfuxxowtXI&t 21:21

“A Future With Hope” by Adam Hamilton. Leadership Institute presentation, Sept. 29, 2022.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bo7dH72sR28&t=0s> 1:31:54

The following link will take you directly to the 1:14:00 mark where Adam describes the 4 categories of stances regarding human sexuality in the church:

<https://youtu.be/bo7dH72sR28?t=4440>

Additional Perspectives

The Center for Faith, Sexuality & Gender blog: “Disciple the Queer Generation”.

This blog sites a recent study which found that 28% of millennial Christians identify as LGBTQ and 39% of all U.S. Gen Zs identify as LGBTQ.

<https://www.centerforfaith.com/blog/disciple-the-queer-generation>

Article in the Christian Century magazine:

“The United Methodist divorce is a mistake” by Will Willemon

<https://www.christiancentury.org/article/features/united-methodist-divorce-mistake>

Article in Reason.com: *What the Methodist Split Tells Us About American Political Polarization*

<https://reason.com/2022/08/10/what-the-methodist-split-tells-us-about-american-political-polarization/>

Article by Sarah Barringer Gordon,

“Why the split in the Methodist Church should set off alarm bells for Americans”

<https://www.wctrib.com/opinion/sarah-barringer-gordon-why-the-split-in-the-methodist-church-should-set-off-alarm-bells-for-americans>