



Q&A About the Disaffiliation Process in the Western North Carolina Conference

What is the Disaffiliation Process?

The 2019 Special Session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church adopted Paragraph 2553 as an addition to the Book of Discipline. This paragraph extends a limited right for United Methodist churches to leave the denomination through the end of 2023 "for reasons of conscience regarding a change in the requirements and provisions of the Book of Discipline related to the practice of homosexuality or the ordination or marriage of self-avowed practicing homosexuals as resolved and adopted by the 2019 General Conference, or the actions or inactions of its annual conference related to these issues which follow." The paragraph sets out the requirements that exiting churches must meet to disaffiliate.

The Conference Board of Trustees Process and the subsequent Disaffiliation Agreement follow ¶2553 of the 2019 Book of Discipline.

What is involved in the process?

The process outlined by the Board of Trustees presents the steps in chronological order. It begins with a letter to the District Superintendent requesting disaffiliation signed by 2-3 church leaders, and includes the instructions that to proceed, a two-thirds majority of the professing members of the local church present and voting at the Church Conference approve the resolution. After adopting a resolution to disaffiliate, the church must reach a written Disaffiliation Agreement with the Conference Trustees. The Disaffiliation Agreement must then be ratified by the voting members of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference.

Prior to the disaffiliation date, a local church shall pay to the Annual Conference any unpaid apportionments for the 12 months immediately prior to their disaffiliation date and an additional 12 months of apportionments, plus unfunded pension obligations, repayment of any vitality grants given to the local church by the conference or district in the last 10 years, and Conference legal costs. A local church must be in good standing as a United Methodist Church in order to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church.

If a church votes to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church, when will they know the payment amount?

The congregation will know the payment amount, except for legal costs, before taking the vote at the Church Conference.

Working with Wespeth, the Western North Carolina Conference has calculated the amount of the unfunded pension liability attributed to each church. This valuation has been conducted solely for this purpose. The Conference will update this amount bi-annually in January and July.

What is the timeline for this process?

Disaffiliation using paragraph 2553 must be complete by December of 2023, therefore the request must be approved by the June 2023 Western North Carolina Annual Conference unless a called Annual

Conference is scheduled in the fall of 2023 or earlier.

Is the process negotiable?

This process doesn't involve negotiation. Per Paragraph 2553, the steps and monetary terms defined in the process and agreement must be followed to the letter and are not negotiable.