

Why the rush to disaffiliate churches from the Texas Annual Conference (TAC)?

You may have heard...

If you are progressive, remain UMC.
If you are traditionalist, join the GMC.

You should know...

The UMC will continue to be a denomination with traditionalists, centrists, and progressives. The UMC's position on human sexuality remains under the traditionalist plan passed at General Conference 2019 and cannot be modified until GC 2024. Even then, it is unclear what our policies will allow. The diversity of theological perspective remains a thriving aspect of our life together as United Methodists.

You may have heard...

The UMC will abandon its doctrine.

You should know...

Our Articles of Religion and our Doctrinal Standards that have been in place since Methodism began will remain unchanged in the United Methodist Church. The UMC can never revoke or alter its Articles of Religion or Confession of Faith. You can find these in the Book of Discipline, along with our Doctrinal History and Standards, in paragraphs 102-105. If anyone infers that these aspects of our church will change, they are incorrect.

You may have heard...

It will be easier for churches in our conference to disaffiliate before Bishop Jones retires.

You should know...

TAC disaffiliation policy is set by the conference's Board of Trustees, not by the bishop. A new bishop would not have the unilateral ability to change the terms of disaffiliation.

You may have heard...

This will settle it. Churches are weary of uncertainty and ready to move on.

You should know...

Some amount of uncertainty and waiting will be inevitable as the Global Methodist Church (GMC) takes shape. Having launched May 1, 2022, the GMC does not have a final book of rules and structure. The existing documents represent a "transitional period of 12 to 18 months until its convening conference" (globalmethodist.org).

You may have heard...

There are two pathways in the Book of Discipline for local churches to disaffiliate from the TAC:
1) ¶2548.2 (requiring a 50% + 1 vote)
2) ¶2553 (requiring a 2/3 vote)

You should know...

¶2553 is the only paragraph in the Book of Discipline which speaks directly to church disaffiliation and is agreed upon by bishops and annual conferences to be the best pathway. The consensus of a 2/3 majority is required under ¶2553. Regardless of disaffiliation pathway, standard financial responsibilities must be met by a disaffiliating church according to conference policy. Disaffiliating pastors should know there will be a 7% discount of CRSP payout, resulting in a 7% reduction of your personal CRSP account as of TAC 2022.

You may have heard...

¶2548.2 is the preferred option because of the lower vote threshold.

You should know...

¶2548.2 is not about a congregation disaffiliating from the UMC. This paragraph sets guidelines for a defunct church to deed its unused property to a different denomination. Judicial Council will rule later this year if this paragraph is constitutional to use for disaffiliation. It would be confusing and chaotic for a church to start the discernment process under one set of guidelines and have to backtrack to a constitutionally approved pathway. Additionally, the consensus of a 2/3 majority as required under ¶2553 helps a church stay viable. Many of our churches couldn't continue if they lost half of their members, not to mention the relational and spiritual damage incurred by a split vote.

You may have heard...

Churches can't afford to take their time to enter a discernment process.

You should know...

Each church's timing with an agreed-upon process should be honored. A false urgency to decide quickly is guided by fear and will only cause disruption and division at the local church level.