

Disaffiliation Process Information & Resources

“My Church is Being Led to Disaffiliate from The UMC, but I Want to #BeUMC - What Can I Do?”

First, Know This: You are Not Alone

Many lay people have expressed concern and frustration due to feeling as if their church is being actively led to leave The UMC - perhaps by members within the church, perhaps by the pastor - with no measured discussion as to why. Many who wish to stay UMC are made to feel as if they are on an island. Please know that there are a great many lay people who are committed to remaining United Methodists, who believe that the things that bind us are far more important than the things that divide. These committed lay people exist in every congregation.

Working Together, Laity Have Power and Influence

It takes a vote of 2/3rds of the church members present at a disaffiliation church conference to approve disaffiliating from The UMC. Already, church conferences on disaffiliation have convened throughout the denomination where it was assumed that the church would vote to disaffiliate, but the number of votes in favor of disaffiliation did not meet the 2/3rds requirement and thus the church remains in connection with The UMC. While a pastor of a local church may decide to personally withdraw from The UMC, pastors do not have the authority to compel church members to vote on disaffiliating or vote a particular way.

Building a Coalition In Support of Remaining UMC

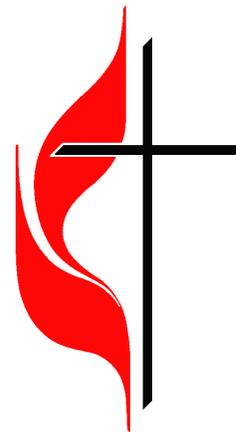
Just as those committed to disaffiliation are actively working to marshal the votes to leave, those who wish for their church to remain UMC also need to connect with one another, share ideas, speak up during the discernment process and encourage one another to show up and vote if a disaffiliation church conference is scheduled. There are countless ways to build such a coalition. The following is just a sampling of the things you can do to advocate for your church to remain UMC:

1. If you do not already have one, **ask your church secretary or pastor for a printout of your church directory, including all *active* and *inactive* church members** and their contact information. (There is no provision in the UMC Discipline to bar an “inactive” member on the church rolls from voting.)
2. Partner with others to **form a strategy team** for reaching people. Remember, you are not alone.
3. **Prioritize in-person, face-to-face contact** with the laity of your church. Make door-to-door visits to the homes of those on the directory list asking for the opportunity to discuss the issue - especially the significant talking points being used to argue for disaffiliation. If you are part of a large church, you will need the help of others to accomplish this. Consider inviting small groups of people (usually less than 20) to gather, perhaps in your home, to discuss the issue before your church conference. In smaller congregations, try having coffee, meeting for lunch, or just dropping by. Think of it like an election where you are working for what you believe is the good of your community.
4. Remember when churches relied on a **good old-fashioned phone tree**? It can be just as effective today, albeit more so by calling cell phone numbers rather than land lines. (see #1)

Ten Ways to Advocate for Your Church to Remain UMC

1. **Get the latest copy of your church directory (active & inactive members)**
2. **Form a Contact Strategy Team**
3. **Prioritize In-Person/Face-to-Face Communication**
4. **Dust Off the “Phone Tree”**
5. **Establish a Facebook Page/Group**
6. **Get Active on Twitter & Instagram too**
7. **ID and Enlist “The Influencers” of Your Church**
8. **Mobilize People to Attend the Disaffiliation Church Conference & Vote**
9. **ID & Organize Members Who Can Effectively Speak in Favor of Staying UMC**
10. **PRAY & Remember that the Holy Spirit IS at Work in All Things**

5. **Create a Facebook page** around the issue and actively invite people to it. Ask others to invite those they know in the congregation also. The more opportunities you create to be in relationship with others, the more it will become apparent your church is filled with people who agree and disagree, but who have lived and served together despite differences.
6. **Don't forget other social media platforms.** Facebook, Twitter and Instagram make up the big three and give you the most potential social media access to the other church members. Do you need help setting up accounts? A younger person in your congregation or family can be very helpful, and the Central Texas Conference Communications Team is always ready to help. Email bradleyalexander@ctcumc.org if you have questions.
7. **Identify and enlist the help of the influencers in your church.** Perhaps this is the president of United Women of Faith (formerly United Methodist Women), or the Trustee chair, or the faithful servant who has taught children's Sunday school in your church for 40 years. Is there an influencer in your church who supports disaffiliation? Meet with that person and seek to understand why. By sharing viewpoints and clarifying any misinformation, perhaps you can find a way forward together?
8. **Mobilize people to attend the disaffiliation church conference** (if one is called). Use phone calls, email, "snail" mail, etc. to keep the need to show up and vote at the forefront of people's minds. Remember, it takes 2/3rds of the voting church members present at the meeting to disaffiliate from The UMC. Your work prior to a potential vote will help people realize that there are many who wish to remain UMC. Encourage those people to attend the meeting and vote. Every member's presence matters (active or inactive - see No.1). Together, you have influence and power!
9. **Identify members who can speak effectively at the church conference in favor of remaining in The UMC.** There will be an opportunity for speeches in favor of and against disaffiliation prior to the vote. Organizing speakers and collaborating on who will speak to which talking point is an effective way to maximize impact. Contact your District Superintendent if you need assistance in structuring your remarks or honing your talking points. They can direct you to available resources/people.
10. **Pray and remember that the Holy Spirit is at work.** Discipleship includes being faithful to Christ's call on our lives. Don't be too quick to dismiss the power of God's Spirit working in and through you. As the saying goes, **YOU have been called to such a time as this!**



More Info Resources

It is tempting to believe what one hears, especially from beloved family, friends, or clergy; however, when evaluating matters as weighty as potential disaffiliation, personal due diligence is warranted. The following are reliable, regularly updated sources of information for more research:

- The CTC website: www.ctcumc.org/disaffiliation and www.ctcumc.org/disaffiliation-FAQ
- Facebook Live Information Session with Bishop Saenz and Conference Lay Leader Darlene Alfred: www.facebook.com/1716945735248674/videos/3400076403649622
- The United Methodist News Service: www.umnews.org
- The ResourceUMC website: www.resourceumc.org
- The Beliefs & Practices of The UMC: www.umc.org/en/who-we-are/ask-the-umc-faqs/beliefs-practices
- Ask the UMC webpages: www.umc.org/en/content/ask-the-umc-is-the-umc-really-part-1
www.umc.org/en/content/ask-the-umc-is-the-umc-really-part-2

For information regarding the denominational structure and more of the Global Methodist Church or the Free Wesleyan denomination, please see their official websites.

This document was originally drafted by Rev. Lara Franklin, Executive Director of the CTC Roberts Center of Leadership, in consultation and collaboration with her colleagues on the Central Texas Cabinet (www.ctcumc.org/cabinet-of-the-ctcumc)