

The Florida Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church

PROCESS REGARDING DISAFFILIATION UNDER BOD ¶ 2553

“...a local church shall have a limited right, under the provisions of this paragraph, to disaffiliate from the denomination 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.”

LOCAL CHURCH DISCERNMENT & COMMUNICATION WITH THE DISTRICT OFFICE

| ACTION | COMMENTARY | COMMUNICATION | TIMELINE |
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| Notice of church’s intent to consider disaffiliation pursuant to BOD ¶ 2553. | After a period of discernment, inquiry and prayer, a local church may send to the District Office a written notice of its intention to consider disaffiliation under BOD ¶ 2553 (see provision above) on church letterhead and signed by the chair of the Church Council/Leadership Team or Lay Leader with a copy to the pastor. In this same letter, a request for the conference to provide the disaffiliation payment amounts may be made. These amounts will be updated as of January 1, 2023. District office will send online link to church for information related to this process. | Local Church sends letter by email to the District Office with the pastor copied. District Office will send online link for information and will request the disaffiliation financial obligations from the Conference Treasurer. | The discernment and inquiry process and letter begins the formal process toward considering disaffiliation. |
| DS to initiate the scheduling of a required informational meeting for the congregation | At this meeting, the DS will provide a presentation on the Future of the UMC, including clarity around ¶ 2553 and its financial obligations, and lay a foundation for a respectful and authentic process. Clergy, lay leadership, and the congregation should attend. | District Office communicates with clergy and lay leadership to schedule the informational meeting. | Prior to requesting a called special church conference. |
| Sample Disaffiliation Agreement and Preparation for Church Conference and Who Can Vote Documents | A sample of the Disaffiliation Agreement between the Local Church and The Florida Conference Board of Trustees, and the Preparation for Church Conference and Who Can Vote? documents sent to the Local Church. | District Office sends the documents to the local church contacts listed on the information form submitted online. | Following receipt of online form submission. |
| Decision of the Church Council / Leadership Team Meeting | After the informational meeting, the Church Council / Leadership Team may choose to meet and decide on moving forward with a request for a called special church conference for disaffiliation. A vote must be taken and minutes to the meeting signed by the recording secretary. Requesting a called special church conference is outlined in BOD ¶ 248. | Church Council / Leadership Team | Following the informational meeting and prior to requesting a called special church conference. |

CALLED SPECIAL CHURCH CONFERENCE FOR DISAFFILIATION PURPOSES

| ACTION | COMMENTARY | COMMUNICATION | TIMELINE |
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| Written request for a called special church conference | Letter requesting a special called church conference for the purpose of voting on disaffiliation. | Local Church sends a letter along with the minutes and attendance of the Church Council/Leadership Team meeting to the District Office by email. | After the Informational Meeting and Church Council / Leadership Team Meeting. |
| District Superintendent reviews the request Resolutions Prepared Questionnaires Sent | DS reviews the request for a church conference and the information provided by the church to assure that it is complete and undertakes any necessary follow-up with the Church Council/Leadership Team before calling the church conference. Resolutions prepared and sent to local church Church and Finance Questionnaires will be provided by the District Office for Portal | DS and District Office to the Local Church. District Office will send letter authorizing special church conference and Resolutions. District Office will provide Church and Finance Questionnaires | After review, the District Superintendent calls the church conference and sets the date and time. |
| Membership Notification Voting Ballot and Certificate | Proper notification of church membership for the church conference must follow BOD ¶ 247 – 248. A voting ballot and Certificate of the Secretary will be prepared by the District Office. | Local Church notifies membership. The District Office prepares and sends to the Local Church. | At least 10 days prior to the called special church conference scheduled date. |
| Hold Church Conference | A special session of a church conference must be convened in accordance with BOD ¶ 247 – 248. BOD ¶ 2553 requires the disaffiliation of a church to be approved by at least <u>TWO-THIRDS (67%)</u> of its professing members who are present and voting at a duly convened church conference. | District Superintendent - Presiding Elder District Office - Sets Agenda Local Church Prints resolution, voting ballots, and professing membership list for check-in and membership verification. | Date scheduled by the District Superintendent. |
| Submit to the District Office | Submit written minutes signed by the recording secretary, attendance sheet and Certificate of the Recording Secretary. | Local Church submits to the district office and FLUMC Portal. Local church mails original Certificate to Conference Treasurer. | Within 1 week of the called special church conference. |
| DS sends letter to Local Church to send to membership | If the vote to disaffiliate passes, the DS will write a letter to be sent via email through the church database to all church members informing them of the outcome of the vote and offering assistance to church members seeking guidance on how to remain United Methodist. | DS sends letter to Local Church. Local Church sends letter in email to church membership | Within 1 week of the called special church conference |

AFTER AN AFFIRMATIVE VOTE TO DISSAFFILIATE

| ACTION | COMMENTARY | COMMUNICATION | TIMELINE |
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| Portal Opened for Local Church | Access given to the Portal through the local Church Dashboard. Complete Step 1 by uploading Church and Finance Questionnaires, and Certificate of the Church Secretary; submitting Property Legal Descriptions through the online for; and downloading a sample Certificate of Insurance | District Office sends an email to local church with instruction | Within 5 business days of the special called church conference vote. |
| Clergy Receives Information Document RE: Clergy Status | District office sends Guidelines for Clergy serving Disaffiliating Churches | District Office to Clergy | Within 5 business days of church disaffiliation vote. |
| Archives for the Annual Conference | Instructions for submitting documents to Archives will be sent to the Local Church from the District Office. | Local Church submits documents in direct coordination with Judi New, Director of Archives. | After the Annual Conference vote and before the disaffiliation date. |
| Final Financial Obligations | The FLUMC Treasurer will provide a statement of the final disaffiliation payment obligations as of February 1, 2023. | FLUMC Treasurer to the Local Church. | One month prior to Annual Conference session. |
| Disaffiliation Agreement prepared | The Conference Office will prepare the disaffiliation agreement and provide it to the Local Church. | Conference Office to the Local Church. | Within 15 days of necessary documents being submitted in the FLUMC Portal. |
| Process and Submit Disaffiliation Agreement and Documents | Process and submit the disaffiliation agreement and supporting documents, such as financial statements, in the FLUMC Portal. Signed original documents must be mailed to the Conference Treasurer. | Local Church uploads processed agreement and documents to the Portal and mails originals to Conference Treasurer. | On or before deadline date provided in Portal. |
| Florida Conference Board of Trustees (FLBOT) Vote | The FLBOT will consider and vote on the disaffiliation of churches that have completed all steps required. | Florida Conference Board of Trustees | On or before one week prior to Annual Conference session. |
| Florida Annual Conference Vote on Disaffiliation | The members of The Florida Annual Conference will vote on approval of the disaffiliation of the church, but only if the church has been approved for disaffiliation by the FLBOT and satisfied all conditions required before the vote. | Florida Annual Conference | The Annual Conference Session for Vote approved by the District Superintendent |

FOLLOWING THE FLORIDA ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE UMC VOTE

| ACTION | COMMENTARY | COMMUNICATION | TIMELINE |
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| Certificate of Insurance is submitted for review and approval | Deliver Certificate of Insurance to the FLUMC Treasurer through the Portal for review and approval. | Local Church uploads form to FLUMC Portal. | Within three (3) weeks after Annual Conference session vote. |
| Payments of total disaffiliation financial obligations | Following approval of its disaffiliation by the Florida Annual Conference of the UMC, the church must pay to FLBOT its total disaffiliation payment amount by check, bank draft, or wire transfer. Financing is not available. | Local Church | No later than the day before Disaffiliation Date. i.e., May 31, 2023 if Disaffiliation Date is June 1, 2023. |
| Satisfy all conditions of the disaffiliation agreement | The disaffiliation of the church will become effective on the disaffiliation date stated in its disaffiliation agreement only if the church has performed all its obligations and satisfied all conditions under its disaffiliation agreement that are required to be performed or satisfied by it before the disaffiliation date stated in its disaffiliation agreement. | Local Church | On or before disaffiliation date. |
| Deliver Release of Trust Clause | Release of the trust clause will be delivered to the church via USPS unless the church has requested and paid for it to be delivered by FedEx. | Conference Office to the Local Church | Within two weeks after disaffiliation date. |
| Performs post-disaffiliation obligations | Fulfill the obligations of section 5 of the disaffiliation agreement. | Local Church | Within 45 days after disaffiliation date. |