

The Official Recommendation of the First United Methodist Discernment Committee

Our consensus: We need to disaffiliate to stay the same. To continue to follow our mission, purpose, and beliefs, we feel we must separate from the United Methodist denomination.

The United Methodist Church is increasingly unrecognizable and ungovernable.ⁱ

- Across the denomination, multiple bishops and Boards of Ordained Ministry have announced that they will no longer follow our denomination's rule book, The UM Book of Discipline.
- Over decades, some UMC leadership has moved from subtly to openly ignoring rules in the Book of Discipline.
- There is no mechanism to hold bishops accountable for refusing to follow the rules.

Many UMC clergy leaders no longer hold a traditional Christian doctrine.ⁱⁱ

- A growing number of UM bishops, pastors, and seminary professors no longer hold to traditional Christian doctrines like the following:
 - The Physical resurrection of Jesus
 - The Trinity
 - The Virgin Birth
 - Other key beliefs of historic Christianity
- Rev. Dr. Mark Davies, an Oklahoma UM pastor and professor at Oklahoma City University (our UM University in OKC) wrote an article posted on Easter Sunday, 2023 wherein he denies both the physical Resurrection of Jesus and the Atonement on the Cross for sin. You can read his article [here](#).

Consequences of Staying with the UMC

- Our apportionment payment (currently approximately \$137,000/yr.) will probably increase significantly because of the dramatic decrease of large churches.
- After 2023, we will not have the option to leave the UMC and keep our property without paying the full price of our property.
- Our current bishop will retire in 2024. If we stay in the UMC, a new, likely more theologically progressive bishop will name Larry's replacement when he retires. He or she may appoint a pastor with much more non-traditional theological views which would run counter to our core beliefs.
- The future of our Church is in the hands of the future bishop and the UMC.
- Staying with the UMC means remaining in a denomination that has been in serious decline for decades.

Consequences of Leaving the UMC

- To leave with our property, we will need to pay a disaffiliation fee to cover current and an extra year of apportionments plus future pension and health benefits.
- We will no longer pay apportionments to the Oklahoma Conference of the United Methodist Church, but we will be free to support any United Methodist cause we choose such as Restore Hope, UMCOR, Circle of Care, etc.
- Our Church is in our own hands allowing us to:
 - Affiliate as we choose
 - Support ministries as we choose
 - Hire pastors that we choose

To remain the same healthy, growing, Bible-centered, open, and welcoming congregation we want to be, we feel we must leave the UMC. We must leave to stay the same.

ⁱ Paragraph 2711.3 of the Book of Discipline says that someone found to have conducted a same sex wedding will face a one-year suspension without pay for the first offence and termination of membership in the conference for second offense. This is not being followed - since bishops are dismissing the charges and not letting the offense go to a church trial.

¶ 2711. Power of the Trial Court

3. *Penalties - If the Trial Results in Conviction.* Further testimony may be heard and arguments by counsel presented regarding what the penalty should be. The trial court shall determine the penalty, which shall require a vote of at least seven members. The trial court shall have the power to remove the respondent from professing membership, terminate the conference membership and/or revoke the credentials of conference membership and/or ordination or consecration of the respondent, suspend the respondent from the exercise of the functions of office, or to fix a lesser penalty. Except, where the conviction is for conducting ceremonies which celebrate homosexual unions, or performing same-sex wedding ceremonies under ¶ 2702.1(b) or (d), the trial court does not have the power to and may not fix a penalty less than the following:

a) First (1st) offense – One (1) year’s suspension without pay.

b) Second (2nd) offense - Not less than termination of conference membership and revocation of credentials of licensing, ordination, or consecration.

The penalty fixed by the trial court shall take effect immediately unless otherwise indicated by the trial court.

Assigning a penalty of less than a suspension for a first offense or less than termination of conference membership and/or revocation of conference membership and ordination or consecration in such circumstances encourages open defiance of the order and discipline of The United Methodist Church.

[UM Bishop Laurie Haller Article Indicates the Book of Discipline Will Not Be Enforced](#)

ⁱⁱ If a bishop in California breaks the discipline, only bishops in the Western Jurisdiction can act. No one in our Jurisdiction (South Central) can do a thing about it.

[Book of Discipline: ¶ 413. Complaints Against Bishops](#)

A pastor on a “stay-UMC” website indicates that breaking the Discipline is no big deal.

<https://um-insight.net/perspectives/ignoring-the-discipline-doesn%27t-doom-the-umc/>

Article after 2019 General Conference where Western Jurisdiction Bishops declared they won’t follow the Book of Discipline.

<https://churchleaders.com/news/365690-umc-western-jurisdiction-will-not-comply-with-traditional-plan.html>

[UM Bishop denies bodily resurrection of Jesus and virgin birth.](#)