

FAQ About The United Methodist Church

1. Is The United Methodist Church formally splitting?

No. The General Conference of The United Methodist Church has not adopted legislation to divide the denomination's assets and resources. Only General Conference has the authority to authorize a denominational split. Currently, some traditionalists have launched a new denomination called the Global Methodist Church and are encouraging like-minded clergy and congregations to disaffiliate from the UMC in order to join the new denomination. Likewise, there are additional clergy and congregations with an array of theological leanings considering leaving the denomination for various reasons.

Book of Discipline ¶2553, adopted by the 2019 General Conference allows a pathway to disaffiliation that does not require a congregation to purchase their property from the Annual Conference. There are other financial responsibilities a congregation must meet to be in accordance with ¶2553. This option is only available until the end of the year 2023. This has motivated some congregations to pursue disaffiliation now instead of waiting for future General Conference legislation.

2. Is The United Methodist Church changing its theology in 2024 to renounce the Bible's authority or deny the Trinity?

No. These basic Christian beliefs and others are cemented in the doctrine of The United Methodist Church through its foundational documents including the [Articles of Religion](#), the [Confession of Faith](#). Both are found in Part III of the *Book of Discipline*.

These historic statements date back to the time of John Wesley. They are all considered part of the Constitution of The United Methodist Church and therefore cannot be easily altered. In fact, to make a change to these historic faith statements would take a two-step process. First, two-thirds of the General Conference delegates would have to vote to alter them. Secondly, that constitutional change must then be approved by a three-fourths aggregate vote of all annual and central conferences of The United Methodist Church worldwide.

In other words, changes in our church's basic doctrine would need to be approved not only by a super-majority of General Conference delegates but also by 75% of all United Methodist ordained elders, ordained deacons and lay members to Annual Conference from around the world. There is no reason to believe this many United Methodists would vote to change core doctrinal standards that have guided our church throughout its history.

3. Why are some areas of the UMC not being held accountable for breaking the Discipline?

In the North Alabama Conference, leaders have not changed their commitment to upholding our *Book of Discipline*. They join the majority of United Methodists around the world in this ongoing commitment.

4. Is the "Reconciliation and Grace Through Separation and Restructuring," known as "the Protocol" dead?

It still has not been decided if the General Conference 2024 will be the postponed 2020 General Conference and will deal with all legislation submitted to that legislative meeting including the Protocol or if it will be a new General Conference with newly elected delegates and all newly submitted legislation. While some of the originators of the Protocol have publicly said they think its time is past, the 2022 North Alabama Conference adopted a resolution encouraging the General Conference to adopt the Protocol legislation. Even if the original Protocol is not presented to the General Conference, there is an expectation there will be other legislation proposed to work toward the same goals as the Protocol. General Conference must consider all legislation submitted.

5. Will The United Methodist Church drop all prohibitions related to human sexuality at its next General Conference in 2024?

The policies of The United Methodist Church are set by its General Conference and it is the only body that can change them. General Conference delegates consider a lot of legislative proposals covering a variety of topics at each General Conference. General Conference delegates come from every Annual and Central Conference around the world and have a diversity of cultural and theological

points of view. Historically legislation to lift prohibitions related to human sexuality have failed. Currently, the UMC has not realigned or restructured in a way to expect the 2024 General Conference to make sweeping changes in this area.

6. Is The United Methodist Church going bankrupt?

There is not a single entity called the United Methodist Church. Instead, we are a connection of many entities (e.g., local churches, annual conferences, General Church Agencies). The General Board of Finance and Administration (GCFA) posts audit reports of all General Church Agencies and Funds on the GCFA website at <http://www.gcfa.org/reports/>. As evidenced by the audit reports, General Church entities are solvent.

7. Are only those considered theologically progressive elected Bishop in The United Methodist Church?

No. Bishops are ordained elders elected to the office of Bishop by their Jurisdictional (in the U.S.) or Central (outside the U.S.) Conference. A Jurisdictional Conference is made up of an equal number of clergy and lay delegates from every Annual Conference in the Jurisdictional area. This means United Methodist bishops come from all geographic areas of the church and reflect the diverse cultural and theological perspectives of the church.

8. Who has oversight of Bishops in the United States?

In the United States, United Methodist bishops are elected by Jurisdictional Conferences to serve in the Jurisdiction (regional area) in which they are elected. Bishops are “amenable for their conduct to their jurisdictional conference” (BOD ¶ 523). In our predecessor denominations, Bishops were elected by the General Conference of the church. In 1939, the Methodist Church was formed when the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South and the Methodist Protestant Church merged. At that time Jurisdictional Conferences were added to the church’s structure (including the segregated Central Jurisdiction in the United States) and given the role of electing bishops. This method of electing Bishops was continued after The

United Methodist Church was created in 1968 with the merger of the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church. Though the segregated Central Jurisdiction was ended and all U.S. Annual Conferences integrated by 1972, the election and oversight of Bishops have remained regional with responsibility being held at the Jurisdictional level and not the General Conference level. (Election and oversight of bishops outside the U.S. are in the central conferences.)

FAQ North Alabama Conference and the Bishop

1. Bishop Wallace-Padgett has said there will potentially be three opportunities for churches to disaffiliate — December 2022, mid-2023 and possibly late 2023. What are the deadlines churches should know?

Below are some key dates and deadlines regarding the upcoming special session of the North Alabama Conference related to church disaffiliation under *Book of Discipline* ¶2553.

May 2023 Special Session:

- Feb 1, 2023 - Last day for a congregation to begin the [discernment process](#) to consider disaffiliation from The United Methodist Church and have time to complete it prior to the May 2023 Special Session. Contact your District Superintendent for more information. Please note: congregations not wishing to disaffiliate from the United Methodist Church do not have to enter a discernment process.
- May 1, 2023 - Deadline for congregations to turn in all disaffiliation-related documentation and financial payments due to the Annual Conference.
- May 11, 2023 - Special Session of the North Alabama Annual Conference to be held with the purpose of processing current requests for disaffiliation under ¶2553 of the United Methodist Book of Discipline. This is the second of potentially three gatherings the North Alabama Annual Conference will have to vote on disaffiliations for churches under Book of Discipline ¶2553.
- Dec. 31, 2023 - The ¶2553 Disaffiliation Process, which was added to the Book of Discipline by the 2019 Special Session of the General

Conference expires.

2. Do the Bishop, Cabinet, Board of Ministry and other groups uphold the *Book of Discipline* in North Alabama?

Yes.

3. Does the North Alabama Conference have any input about the next bishop that will be assigned to our Conference?

Bishops are elected by a Jurisdictional Conference composed of clergy and lay delegates from every Annual Conference in that jurisdictional area. The North Alabama Conference is a part of the Southeastern Jurisdiction. Our delegation to the 2022 Southeastern Jurisdiction is listed at [here](#).

Bishops are assigned by the Jurisdiction's episcopacy committee. This committee also has representatives from every Annual Conference in the Jurisdiction. The North Alabama members of the SEJ Episcopacy Committee are Rev. Dr. Robin Scott and Steve Lyles.

4. Does a Bishop make all the decisions for an Annual Conference?

Bishops provide spiritual leadership and general oversight to the worldwide United Methodist Church. They serve in various leadership roles at the General Church and Jurisdictional levels. In the Annual Conference he or she serves, a Bishop sets all clergy appointments, is the presiding officer at the annual conference session and rules on points of law.

There are many teams and committees, comprised of North Alabama clergy and laity elected by the Annual Conference that also have leadership, decision-making and administrative responsibilities for North Alabama. Some of these include:

- Board of Laity
- Board of Ministry
- Board of Pension
- Conference Council on Finance and Administration

- Conference Nominations Team
- Conference Trustees

5. The Southeastern Jurisdiction may assign a new Bishop to North Alabama in January 2023. Will this change the North Alabama Conference disaffiliation process?

The Conference Trustees have the responsibility for the disaffiliation process. Any changes recommended by a new bishop would have to be approved and then implemented by the Conference Trustees.

Note: The 2022 Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference reassigned Bishop Debra Wallace-Padgett to continue serving the North Alabama and Holston Conferences through August of 2024.

6. Do local churches and clergy get a say in the clergy appointment process in the North Alabama Conference?

Yes. The Bishop and Appointive Cabinet consult with clergy each year and with a church's Staff-Parish or Pastor-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC). These consultations help the Bishop and Cabinet to identify gifts, graces, ministry priorities and needs, context and other factors they will consider while prayerfully making pastoral appointments. Their goal each year is for pastoral appointments to be successful for both the clergy and the congregation, so they take the information they receive during consultations very seriously.

7. Is the North Alabama Conference going to start new churches in areas of North Alabama where congregations are disaffiliating?

Yes! The Conference's long-standing ministry of planting new churches and ministries will continue. The Conference Leadership Team is actively developing plans to start new congregations and ministries in areas where current United Methodist congregations vote to leave the denomination. These will include new churches, house churches, fresh expressions and more.

8. The Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference (SEJ) met in early November 2022. Did they assign a new Bishop to North Alabama?

No. The 2022 SEJ Conference approved Bishop assignments for the Jurisdiction that keeps Bishop Debra Wallace-Padgett serving both the North Alabama and Holston Conferences through August of 2024.

The SEJ will meet again in July 2024 to elect new Bishops and make new assignments of all SEJ Bishops to take effect on Sept. 1, 2024.

FAQ Local Congregations and Laity

1. Is our congregation required to enter a discernment process right now?

No. There is no *Book of Discipline* requirement that all churches must go through a discernment process at this time to consider continued affiliation or disaffiliation from the denomination. In fact, some churches feel that doing so would be disruptive to their congregation's ministry momentum.

The steps set forth by the North Alabama Conference Board of Trustees for churches to withdraw from The United Methodist Church requires an assessment/discernment process guided by the District Superintendent. However, if your congregation is not seeking to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church you do not need to undergo a discernment process.

2. I am a lay person and think my congregation will vote to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church. I want to remain a United Methodist. What can I do?

If you want to remain a United Methodist after your local church disaffiliates, you can and all of us in the North Alabama Conference are excited to continue in ministry with you!

There are two ways you can remain a United Methodist in North Alabama after your church disaffiliates:

1. You may transfer your membership to another local United Methodist Church.
2. You may transfer your membership to your District's Membership Roll.

Additionally, the Conference Leadership Team is actively developing plans to start new congregations and ministries in areas where current United Methodist congregations vote to leave the denomination. These will include new churches, house churches, fresh expressions and more.

All laity who wish to remain United Methodists but are part of a congregation planning to disaffiliate should visit www.umcna.org/umc-membership for more information.

3. What happens if our pastor decides to leave The United Methodist Church, but our congregation wishes to continue as a United Methodist church?

The Bishop will appoint a new pastor to your congregation.

4. What happens if our congregation votes to disaffiliate from the UMC, but our pastor wants to remain in The United Methodist Church?

Once your congregation's disaffiliation is complete, you will no longer be appointed a pastor by the North Alabama Conference. Your pastor will receive a new appointment and it will be up to your congregation to secure your congregation's pastoral leadership. If your church is planning to unite with a different denomination, you will work with the leaders of that denomination to determine pastoral leadership.

5. Our congregation is voting on disaffiliation, but we know the vote will not be unanimous. What about the members of our church who don't want to leave The United Methodist Church?

For many congregations, entering the discernment process and holding a church conference vote to determine whether they will remain United Methodist or disaffiliate from the denomination will be emotional and potentially divisive. In these churches the congregation's vote will probably not be unanimous. Some

members may even feel their disagreement with the final decision – whatever it is – means they can no longer continue as part of the congregation.

Clergy and church leaders are urged to make sure disagreements about your church's future do not leave some members without a church home. If your congregation is leaving The United Methodist Church, please give a list of members who wish to remain in the denomination to your district superintendent who will help them unite with another United Methodist church or invite them to be part of a new United Methodist ministry being planted in your area. These will include new churches, house churches, fresh expressions and more. The North Alabama Conference is committed to ensuring that all who wish to remain a United Methodist will be able to do so even if their congregation disaffiliates.

6. Why does our congregation have to go through a discernment process in order to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church?

The steps set forth by the North Alabama Conference Board of Trustees for churches to withdraw from The United Methodist Church requires an assessment/discernment process guided by the District Superintendent.

7. Our congregation has been told we must immediately enter a discernment process if we want to leave the UMC. What is the urgency?

The steps set forth by the North Alabama Conference Board of Trustees for churches to withdraw from The United Methodist Church requires an assessment/discernment process guided by the District Superintendent. The provisions of *Book of Discipline* ¶2553 added by the 2019 General Conference of The United Methodist Church expire on December 31, 2023, and shall not be used after that date. If your congregation is considering leaving the UMC under ¶2553, you would need to complete that process by the end of next year.

The final step of the process is the North Alabama Annual Conference ratifying a congregation's disaffiliation. There will at least two opportunities for an Annual Conference vote – December 2022 and mid-2023. The mid-year Annual Conference session may be a part of the regular June session or it may be a called session in the weeks leading up to the June session. The Bishop and Conference leadership are currently discerning which option is optimal for North Alabama.

Finally, it is possible that there will be a third opportunity for the Annual Conference to process disaffiliations in late 2023.

While your congregation does not need to immediately enter that process, in order to make the December 31, 2023, deadline, you would need to enter the process by early-2023 or mid-2023 if an additional special session of the annual conference is called for late 2023.

8. Our church wants to enter the discernment process. How do we start?

The first step is to notify your District Superintendent that you intend to enter into a period of discernment. Information about the North Alabama Conference discernment process can be requested at www.umcna.org/resourcedetail/call-to-prayer-and-discernment-16588814.

9. Is a pastor being negligent for not encouraging the congregation he or she is serving to enter into a discernment process?

No. There is no *Book of Discipline* requirement that all churches must go through a discernment process at this time to consider continued affiliation or disaffiliation from the denomination.

10. Must our pastor lead us through the discernment process? Can laity initiate the discernment process for our church?

The community spiritual discernment process established by the North Alabama Conference requires that the pastor be involved in the process.

11. Who sets the terms of disaffiliation for North Alabama congregations?

The Conference Board of Trustees has the responsibility for the disaffiliation process. Conference Trustees are clergy and laity elected by the Annual Conference.

12. The Southeastern Jurisdiction may assign a new Bishop to North Alabama in January 2023. Will this change the North Alabama Conference disaffiliation process?

The Conference Trustees have the responsibility for the disaffiliation process. Any changes recommended by a new bishop would have to be approved and then implemented by the Conference Trustees.

13. Does our congregation need special legal representation to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church?

The disaffiliation process in North Alabama does not require a local church to have legal representation.

14. Others have asked us to share the total amount of our congregation's disaffiliation costs. Do we have to share our financial agreement with anyone?

No. Your church's disaffiliation agreement is negotiated between your congregation and the Conference Trustees. There is no other group with whom you must share the financial details in order to move forward with disaffiliation.

15. We've been told there are many North Alabama Conference churches entering into the discernment process. Does this mean all of them are leaving The United Methodist Church?

No. Undertaking a truly Spirit-led discernment process means there is no predetermined answer a congregation is seeking. Instead, discernment is an intentional process of seeking God's guidance as a congregation looks to its future. As North Alabama congregations work through their discernment process some are discerning to leave The United Methodist Church while others are discerning to continue as United Methodists with a renewed commitment and a clear vision for ministry.

16. Are all the churches voting to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church planning to join the new Global Methodist Church?

No. Churches that are voting to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church are discerning a variety of options for their future. Some congregations are choosing to ask to join the Global Methodist Church, others are seeking to align with other Wesleyan denominations and still others are choosing to become independent churches with no denominational affiliation.

17. Our church is in the discernment process regarding disaffiliation from The United Methodist Church. The Conference has provided several resources to guide us through this process. Are there specific questions we should be asking ourselves as we consider disaffiliation?

Each congregation who undergoes a discernment process is encouraged to consider how ending your relationship with The United Methodist Church will impact all aspects of your church's ministry. Some questions to consider:

- How will our local community view this change in our church?
- How will we secure future pastoral leadership?
- How will we provide health and pension benefits for staff?
- Who will set consistent standards for our congregation's doctrine and statements of belief?
- Who will set and oversee the policies and procedures for our congregation?
- What committees and decision-making bodies will we organize to oversee our church's ministry effectively?
- What organizations will we partner with for local missions, regional missions and worldwide missions?
- How will our lay leadership and clergy find quality training and continuing education opportunities?

18. Will our congregation have to purchase our building from the North Alabama Conference if we vote to disaffiliate under *Book of Discipline* ¶2553?

Book of Discipline ¶2553 states that a church disaffiliating under this paragraph, which expires Dec. 31, 2023, "shall have the right to retain its real and personal, tangible and intangible property. All transfers of property shall be made prior to disaffiliation. All costs for transfer of title or other legal work shall be borne by the disaffiliating local church."(¶2553.4c)

Other financial provisions must be met when disaffiliating in this manner, but purchasing the church's property from the Conference is not a part of the North Alabama Conference's terms of disaffiliation under ¶2553.

19. Our church wants to disaffiliate, but we do not have the funds to pay all the financial costs of the disaffiliation process. Can we offer a promissory note and make payments on this debt?

Book of Discipline ¶2553.4f states "Payment shall occur prior to the effective date of departure." Therefore, all financial costs must be paid in full in order to disaffiliate under ¶2553.

20. Our congregation is on a multipoint charge. What if one of the congregations on the charge votes to disaffiliate with The United Methodist Church but the others wish to continue as United Methodists?

Each congregation can make its own decision regarding continued affiliation with The United Methodist Church or disaffiliation from the denomination. If one church leaves, the others will be able to stay and continue ministry as United Methodist congregations.

21. If our congregation continues in The United Methodist Church, will we have to receive a pastor that conflicts with our traditional or progressive beliefs?

The Bishop and Cabinet work diligently and prayerfully to match clergy and congregations so that pastoral appointments will be successful. They consult with not only clergy, but also with the local church's Staff-Parish / Pastor-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) to understand the needs and ministry priorities of the congregation.

22. Our pastor has some strong views that differ from many people in our congregation (ex. theological views or preference for or against disaffiliation). We don't feel like he or she is willing to pastor people with differing views. What can our congregation do?

You should contact your Staff-Parish / Pastor-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC). Your District Superintendent consults with the SPRC about pastoral effectiveness,

alignment with the congregation and appointments.

23. If our congregation disaffiliates and becomes an independent church, will the North Alabama Conference help us find a pastor?

No. The Bishop and Cabinet only make appointments for churches within the North Alabama Conference. If your church disaffiliates from The United Methodist Church and thus leaves the North Alabama Conference your congregation will be responsible for recruiting and hiring your own pastor.

24. Are traditionalists being asked to leave the North Alabama Conference?

No. North Alabama Conference leadership has not asked any congregation or clergy to leave the denomination. Additionally, there has been no legislation adopted by the North Alabama Annual Conference or the General Conference of The United Methodist Church that asks any congregation to consider disaffiliation from The United Methodist Church.

North Alabama Conference leadership is committed to the Conference continuing to be a community where traditionalists, centrists and progressives are in ministry together to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

25. Why are traditionalist congregations being encouraged to leave The United Methodist Church when they agree with the *Book of Discipline* regarding human sexuality and other matters?

Much of the encouragement to leave The United Methodist Church is coming from other traditionalists within the denomination who feel they no longer want to continue as United Methodists for various reasons and are inviting others to join them in leaving the denomination.

The North Alabama Conference leadership feels traditionalists, along with centrists and progressives, are an important part of our Conference and denomination and is not encouraging anyone to leave the denomination. Conference leaders understand some will discern they wish to disaffiliate from the UMC. Though saddened when churches discern to disaffiliate, North Alabama is committed to bless those who make this decision.

26. We've been told our congregation is asked to pay the Conference a large portion of our church budget in apportionments. Is this true?

Since 2016, North Alabama Conference has funded its budget by local churches using a proportional giving-based funding model where each local church is asked to remit a minimum of 10% (a tithe) of its unrestricted receipts on a monthly basis in support of the Conference budget and the local church's district budget. Creating faithfulness to Biblical stewardship has been a primary goal of the proportional giving-based funding model. This biblically-based tithe funds ministry at the district, conference, jurisdiction and general church levels.

27. What happens to my UMC membership if my church disaffiliates from The United Methodist Church?

In order to continue as a United Methodist after your current church disaffiliates, you must act. You can transfer your membership to another United Methodist congregation or to your District's membership roll.

Visit <https://www.umcna.org/umc-membership> for more information and a form you can use to transfer your membership.

28. My church has voted to disaffiliate but I want to remain a United Methodist. How can I transfer my membership to my District?

If you want to remain a United Methodist after your local church disaffiliates, you can and all of us in the North Alabama Conference are excited to continue in ministry with you! Please visit www.umcna.org/umc-membership. On that page there are links to a form you can complete to transfer your membership to your District's membership roll.

29. Can I continue to serve in a District, Conference, Jurisdictional or General Church leadership role to which I was elected if my church disaffiliates?

Lay members who serve in elected roles at the District, Conference, Jurisdictional or General Church levels must be members of The United Methodist Church. If you are currently serving in an elected position, you must maintain membership in the UMC to continue in that role. You can keep your UMC membership when your church disaffiliates by transferring your membership to another North Alabama United Methodist congregation or to your District's membership roll.

Visit www.umcna.org/umc-membership for more information about transferring your membership.

FAQ Clergy and Surviving Spouses

1. What happens to a clergy person who wishes to remain United Methodist if the congregation he or she is currently serving disaffiliates from The United Methodist Church?

The North Alabama Conference Appointive Cabinet will work with them to secure a new appointment within the North Alabama Conference. *The United Methodist Book of Discipline* ¶334.1 says “Every effective elder in full connection who is in good standing shall be continued under appointment by the bishop.” The Conference Leadership Team is actively developing plans to start new congregations and ministries in areas where current United Methodist congregations vote to leave the denomination. These will include new churches, house churches, fresh expressions and more. These new ministries will provide new appointment opportunities for clergy.

2. Is a pastor being negligent for not encouraging the congregation he or she is serving to enter into a discernment process?

No. There is no *Book of Discipline* requirement that all churches must go through a discernment process at this time to consider continued affiliation or disaffiliation from the denomination.

3. Can a credentialed (active or retired) United Methodist clergy serve a Global Methodist Church or independent church?

Credentialed United Methodist Clergy, active or retired, may not serve non-United Methodist churches unless the context is approved by the Board of Ordained Ministry and the bishop as an appointment to an extension ministry setting governed by ¶343 and ¶344 of *The Book of Discipline*. Serving in a non-related church without approval is deemed as withdrawal from United Methodist membership and credentials.

Retirement does not change these requirements. A retired UMC Elder is still an Elder and under the authority of the Office of Bishop, Board of Ordained Ministry and Clergy Session of the Conference. The Retired Elder still has all the powers and responsibilities of an Elder. The retired Elder can be appointed to serve a church. If not under appointment, the retired Elder must affiliate with a local United Methodist Church charge conference and therein annually report all ministry activity.

4. Will clergy be able to continue in the same pension and health benefits program if they leave The United Methodist Church?

No, disaffiliated clergy will not continue in the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP) because CRSP is a UMC plan. Any retirement plan for clergy no longer in The United Methodist Church will not be the same plan as CRSP, as no disaffiliating group may continue to sponsor that plan. However, Wespeth is available to serve all Methodist expressions. *The Book of Discipline* authorizes Wespeth to administer benefit plans for annual conferences, large or small groups of churches, or a single church that changes its affiliation with The United Methodist Church. While some connectional benefit plans sponsored by United Methodist annual conferences are not available to disaffiliated churches (for example, CRSP), these churches may choose to sponsor other Wespeth-administered plans for their clergy and lay employees. Please call 1-800-851-2201 to speak with a Retirement Services representative.

5. Is Wespeth working with the Global Methodist Church (GMC) to provide employee benefit plans to clergy and laypersons of their denomination? Is the GMC able to continue sponsoring CRSP for its clergy?

From Wespeth FAQ (See www.wespeth.org/assets/1/7/5857.pdf): Wespeth is in dialogue with the GMC to provide their churches employee benefit plans going forward, including retirement and health and welfare plans, after the GMC is formed. Discussions are still in progress. However, any retirement plan will not be the same plan as the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP), as no disaffiliating group may continue to sponsor that plan. The retirement plans under discussion would be a new defined contribution plan specifically for the GMC. Wespeth provides retirement services to some disaffiliated local churches already, by offering sponsorship in the United Methodist Personal Investment

Plan (UMPIP).

6. Will retired clergy still be able to receive their pension if they leave The United Methodist Church?

Yes, an already retired clergyperson who surrenders credentials (voluntarily or involuntarily) after retirement or terminates their conference relationship does not lose earned pension benefits. Earned pension benefits are vested under the terms of the retirement plans and cannot be taken away. However, the clergyperson may forgo certain future pension benefit increases, such as past service rate (PSR) increases under the Pre-1982 Plan. Additionally, the retired clergyperson might have other benefits in retirement that could be affected by termination (for example: retiree medical coverage, which is subject to the rules and policies of the annual conference).

7. Will the pension of clergy surviving spouses be impacted by churches leaving The United Methodist Church?

No. If you currently are receiving pension payments from Wespath as a surviving spouse or other contingent annuitant or beneficiary your pension benefits will not change as a result of a separation or disaffiliation of your local church.

8. Can a clergy who leave The United Methodist Church still qualify for a superannuate home in the North Alabama Conference?

Current residency would not be impacted but the question regarding future residents is currently under review by Superannuate Homes which is an incorporated agency with its own bylaws, officers and board of directors.

9. Are traditionalists being asked to leave the North Alabama Conference?

No. North Alabama Conference leadership has not asked any congregation or clergy to leave the denomination. Additionally, there has been no legislation adopted by the North Alabama Annual Conference or the General Conference of

The United Methodist Church that asks any congregation to consider disaffiliation or any pastor to consider withdrawing from The United Methodist Church.

North Alabama Conference leadership is committed to the Conference continuing to be a community where traditionalists, centrists and progressives are in ministry together to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.