

IGRC Disaffiliation Process – Para. 2553 BOD

PHASE 1 – Initial Inquiry

- Facilitated under the direction of the Superintendent and Bishop
- Purpose: Conduct one or more informational sessions with members of the local church before a formal decision by the local church is made
- Primary goals:
 - To ensure that all members are invited to participate in informational sessions
 - To listen for the concerns of all members especially those which prompt their inquiry about disaffiliation
 - To provide facts and answer questions about the current polity and doctrine of the UMC as it is represented in the current Book of Discipline
 - To present in detail the “basis” upon which a local church may formally request disaffiliation under the terms of Para. 2553

PHASE 2 – Formal Engagement

- ▶ This phase is initiated by the Bishop's Office upon receipt of a written request for disaffiliation from the local church.
- ▶ Goal: To ensure mutual accountability to our faith in Jesus Christ as United Methodist Christians and to the Book of Discipline through diligent communication between the local church, its professing members, and the leaders of the Illinois Great Rivers Annual Conference.
- ▶ Means of Communication:
 - ▶ First – Formal Letter from Local Church requesting disaffiliation
 - ▶ Second – A meeting of members from the Conference Disaffiliation Coordinating Team with local church leaders to review the initial draft of the Disaffiliation Agreement and answer questions.
- ▶ The Local Church Request for Disaffiliation must include:
 - ▶ A clear statement of the reason for the disaffiliation request, and
 - ▶ A signed attestation of that their reason conforms to the requirements of disaffiliation outlined in Paragraph 2553 (BOD).
 - ▶ The local church must also submit a digital roster of all professing members with both e-mail and street addresses (.xls or .csv format).
- ▶ The terms of the Disaffiliation Agreement will comply with Paragraph 2553 (BOD). The Conference Board of Trustees have implemented the following financial terms of the agreement:
 - ▶ Pension liability in “an amount equal to the local church's pro rata share of any aggregate unfunded pension obligations at current market rate to the annual conference,”
 - ▶ Two years of apportionments (the full amount of the current year plus the next full year, and
 - ▶ An additional “Trust Clause Release” assessment in the amount of 10% of the aggregated total of pension liability plus 2 years apportionments.

PHASE 3 – Review and Response

- ▶ This phase begins as the local church leadership team reviews the Disaffiliation Agreement presented by the CDCT.
- ▶ The local church leaders shall carefully review all terms of the disaffiliation agreement. They may seek answers to their questions or initiate additional dialogue with the Conference Disaffiliation Coordinating Team by contacting the designated representative of the CDCT.
- ▶ When the local church team accepts the agreement as final and ready to present to the congregation for voting, they will contact the DS and/or designated representative of the CDCT to indicate their readiness to move to the next Phase.
- ▶ Local church should begin legal steps to establish a new not-for-profit corporation which will receive assets if the disaffiliation is approved.

PHASE 4 – Church Conference

- ▶ Purpose: To inform the PROFESSING MEMBERSHIP, answer questions, and conduct Church Conference vote under the supervision of the DS
- ▶ Superintendent's Office will be responsible for scheduling the Church Conference date, overseeing the communication to the Professing Members, providing the written ballots, and monitoring the distribution of ballots to voting members and counting of the ballots after the vote.
- ▶ Local Church shall be responsible for providing an updated mailing roster with contact information for all Professing Members to the Superintendent's Office as well as all costs and labor associated with communication about the Church Conference.

PHASE 5 – Pre-Annual Conference Steps

- ▶ **Goals:**
 - ▶ Completion of all terms of the Disaffiliation Agreement prior to Special Session of Annual Conference and
 - ▶ Follow-up communications with all Professing Members to seek individual direction for church membership
- ▶ **Local Church Responsibilities:**
 - ▶ Finalize establishment of a not-for-profit corporation and provide a CERTIFICATE OF GOOD STANDING by stated deadline.
 - ▶ Finalize all agreed upon terms of the Disaffiliation Agreement in coordination with CDCT include full payment of the financial terms into escrow by stated deadline.
 - ▶ Cooperate with Superintendent's Office to contact all Professing Members to seek their direction about their UMC membership for the future.

PHASE 6 – Annual Conference

- The Resolution for Disaffiliation will be prepared by staff and presented for the Annual Conference Agenda.
- Disaffiliation Resolutions (in a similar fashion to Resolutions for Church Closure) are not debatable and are voted up or down by a simple majority vote of the members of the Annual Conference.

PHASE 7 – Post-Annual Conference Steps

- ▶ Finalize the release of the Local Church assets into the ownership of the new not-for-profit entity
- ▶ Release of the escrowed funds to the Conference Treasurer
- ▶ Completion of transfers of members who wish to remain United Methodist and ensure supportive care for them through nearby U.M. Local Churches
- ▶ Local Church Leaders cooperate with CDCT to review and complete any details yet to be finished including:
 - ▶ Posting of public announcements as agreed upon
 - ▶ Finalizing removal of UM logos/signage and moving historical materials to Conference Archives
 - ▶ Submitting to the District Office the updated roster of remaining Professing Members who have not yet transferred their memberships to other congregations