

**FAQ about Special Church Conference
Matecumbe United Methodist Church
March 25, 2023
1:30 PM**

What is the purpose of this special church conference?

The purpose is to vote on disaffiliation from the United Methodist Church per paragraph 2553 in the *Book of Discipline*. A church may vote to leave the UMC based on matters of conscience related to the church's stance on the ordination of gay people and same-gender marriage. The Matecumbe United Methodist Church Administrative Board voted unanimously to recommend disaffiliation and to bring this matter before the congregation for a vote.

Are all United Methodist churches voting?

No, a vote is optional. Last year (2022) 1825 United Methodist Churches voted to disaffiliate (*US News*)

Who is able to vote?

Full members of MUMC are able to vote but must be present to do so. There can be no absentee or proxy voting. If you have questions about your membership status, please contact the church office. Non-members and Associate Members may attend on March 25 but will not receive a paper ballot.

What will determine if MUMC disaffiliates from the UMC?

Paragraph 2553 of the *Book of Discipline* requires that 2/3 of the votes cast be in favor of the motion in order for it to pass.

What happens if the motion passes?

If MUMC votes to disaffiliate from the UMC, a process will begin whereby the church leadership will submit substantial information to the conference in order for proper legal papers to be prepared. These documents will be due by the beginning of June. The disaffiliation will come before the annual conference for approval on August 5 and the disaffiliation would be effective September 1, 2023 if all obligations have been met.

What are the obligations?

When a church votes to disaffiliate the obligations of the disaffiliating church are outlined in paragraph 2553. Among those are payment of financial obligations to the annual conference. MUMC's obligations are just under \$49,000. This amount would be paid in a lump sum on or before September 1 and would give the remaining church FULL rights to all buildings and properties currently held in covenant with the UMC. The value of the holdings that would be transferred in full to the remaining church is estimated between \$3,500,000 and \$4,000,000. Another obligation is to secure property and liability insurance (the current insurance is with the Florida Conference). Other obligations are sending all archives to the Florida Conference, removing signs and symbols of the United Methodist Church, naming the new church, identifying a pastor etc.

If the vote to disaffiliate passes, what will happen to those who want to remain United Methodist?

Those members wanting to remain United Methodist will have access to information about other churches where their membership can be transferred as well as a virtual community for United Methodists to engage in worship and learning. It's my assumption that current MUMC members who want to maintain membership with the UMC would still be encouraged to continue worshipping in the same/current sanctuary (by the newly named church).