

PHILADELPHIA CHURCH

1. What amount will we have to pay to leave the UMC?

The requirements are listed in the FAQs and in the “Agreement to Separate” as found on pumcfortmill.org. An estimate of these calculations will be provided at the August 11th Informational Meeting.

2. What happens to church building, parsonage and cemetery in disaffiliating?

After satisfying all obligations to the SC Conference including required payments, the SC Conference Board of Trustees would transfer all ownership to the “new entity” created by Philadelphia.

3. Other than being a part of the UMC what are the options of other organizations to become a part of or will we be a standalone church?

This Team will provide a broad overview of the options for Philadelphia if the decision is to separate. There are certainly other denominations as well as an independent status to consider. It is our recommendation that the congregation first decide if a separation is desired and if so, a new committee be formed to deeply examine denominational options to be voted upon by the congregation at a later date. Separation from the UMC would not be finalized until the SC Annual Conference in June 2025, so there would be time to explore those options.

4. Is it true that once we complete the Discernment process at PUMC, our church cannot have a churchwide vote to decide the future of our church until the RH District Superintendent (DS) schedules a church conference for our church to vote? Yes

When did we ask for a date from the RH DS?

A letter was sent from Terry Dolch as Church Council chair on May 31, 2024 to Rev. Dr. Anthony Hodge our DS. Terry received confirmation from Rev. Hodge of our wish to enter the Discernment Process for Possible Separation from the UMC. We were informed that due to the proximity of our timing to the SC Annual Conference it would be awhile before we were given a date for the Church Conference vote. We will begin to publicize that date as soon as it is given. It cannot be before August 15th which is the end of our discernment period.

5. Please provide apportionment listing and what makes up each line item including description details. Including the following, % to SC Conf, vs corporate church; seminaries supported; is the Epworth Children’s Home included; now components added after 2020 GC.

- As of May 2024, we have paid \$9,799 out of the \$58,794 apportionments allocated to PUMC. They are calculated based on the pastor and staff’s salaries, benefits, and housing and other church programs (not including debt repayment or missions). 54% of the money stays in the SC conference, 14% goes to missions throughout the greater UMC, 6% to district offices and parsonages, 26% to general and jurisdictional funding. This link explains how the SC annual apportionments are calculated and where they are used: sowing-to-the-spirit-final-web.pdf (umcsc.org)
- Epworth Children’s Home is not an apportioned item and relies heavily on the financial gifts received through the annual Mother’s Day and Work Day offerings that UM churches in South Carolina have collected for more than 70 years.

6. If we separate, does that mean LGBTQ persons are not welcome at our church?

We affirm that all people are of sacred worth and are equally valuable in the sight of God. Our congregation is to be in ministry with all people in order to facilitate a personal walk with Jesus. Our mission is to Grow In Love, Worship In Love, Serve In Love.

7. Will the UWF (United Women of Faith) and UMM (United Methodist Men) connections be impacted by the separation?

Both UWF and UMM are United Methodist Church organizations. However, if a separation occurs, it is up to the individual groups to determine if they would like to remain with the conference, leave or form its own organization.

8. I've heard that we need to discontinue use of the UMC Hymnal. Is that true? **No, we will be able to keep our current hymnals**
9. Our church was founded in 1832. I think we became a UMC in 1968. What other Methodist denominations has Philadelphia been before 1968 and when were these changes made? When did the United Methodist Church take ownership of our property?

It is not clear if Philadelphia was a part of the splits within the Methodist Episcopal Church that occurred between 1832 and 1845. In 1939 the Methodist Episcopal Church, The Methodist Episcopal Church South and the Methodist Protestant Church were reunited and formed "The Methodist Church ". In 1968, The Methodist Church and The Evangelical United Brethren Church joined and formed the "United Methodist Church". It was at this time that our property went into the United Methodist Church trust. Please review the UMC Article "what is the United Methodist Trust Clause" for details in response to your questions:

<https://www.umc.org/en/content/ask-the-umc-what-is-the-united-methodist-trust-clause>

PASTORAL

1. If we leave the UMC, will pastor David stay with us until the end of June 2025?

Pastor David was appointed to PUMC for the 2024 - 2025 year. SC appointments are received at the Annual Conference in June each year.

2. Why is pastor David involved in the member decision process?

As Pastor of Philadelphia UMC, Pastor David works with church leadership to guide, encourage, provide spiritual leadership and a connection of this congregation to the RH District.

Per Pastor David's answer to a previous question – he is not a voting member of the church but has a "voice". *"Did you know a pastor in the United Methodist Church has no vote on local church decisions, policy or procedures? I do not have a vote in any of our leadership teams: Administrative Council, Trustees, Finance, Missions, Nurture, Evangelism, or any other committee, I only have a voice. I do have a responsibility as pastor, to encourage leadership groups to make prayerful decisions while carefully considering the church as a whole and if it aligns with PUMC's purpose to worship in love, grow in love and serve in love. "*

3. Unlike what we were initially reassured, I read on a site an amendment to the BOD paragraph 425 – Pastor could be assigned regardless of sexual orientation and that church leaders will receive training on accepting pastor of any sexual orientation.

Inclusive training has been offered through the General Conference and now includes "sexual orientation". See changes below:

- i. Amend ¶ 425.1 ii. Responsibility (changes made to Paragraph 1 Only as noted by strike-through or additions by underline)

1. Clergy shall be appointed by the bishop, who is empowered to make and fix all appointments in the episcopal area of which the annual conference is a part. Appointments are to be made with consideration of the gifts and evidence of God's grace of those appointed, to the needs, characteristics, and opportunities of congregations and institutions, and with faithfulness to the commitment to an open itineracy. Open itineracy means appointments are made without regard to race, ethnicity ~~origin~~, gender, color, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or age, except for the provisions of mandatory retirement. Annual conferences shall, in their training of staff-parish relations committees, emphasize the open nature of itineracy and prepare congregations to receive the gifts and graces of appointed clergy without regard to race, ethnicity ~~origin~~, gender, color, disability, marital status, economic condition, sexual orientation, or age. The concept of itineracy is important, and sensitive attention should be given in appointing clergy with physical challenges to

responsibilities and duties that meet their gifts and graces. Through appointment-making, the connectional nature of the United Methodist system is made visible.

DISCIPLINE AND GENERAL CONFERENCE CHANGES

1. Please provide a list of the changes to the UMC Book of Discipline that were voted and approved at the UMC General Conference 2020 held May 2024.

The following link, “All that General Conference Passed” provides a chart of all legislation from the May General Conference. <https://www.umnews.org/en/news/all-that-general-conference-passed>

2. Is it true the following changes have been made?

a. Is it true that the UMC redefined in United Methodism from man and woman to two consenting adults in marriage?

The United Methodist Revised Social Principles updated verbiage follows:

Within the church, we affirm marriage as a sacred, lifelong covenant that brings two people of faith, an adult man and woman of consenting age, or two adult persons of consenting age into union with one another and into deeper relationship with God and the religious community.

In the Book of Discipline, delegates adopted the statement:

No clergy at any time may be required to provide for or compelled to perform, or prohibited from performing, any marriage, union, or blessing. All clergy have the right to exercise and preserve their conscience when requested to perform any marriage, union, or blessing.

b. Is it true that the restriction of LGBTQ has been removed so openly, practicing gay/lesbian/non-binary identified people can be certified, appointed and serve as lead pastors/clergy and other leadership roles in local churches, state and national UMC offices including performing same-sex wedding ceremonies.

- The General Conference has decided that a person’s entrance into the ministry process of the United Methodist Church shall not be prohibited by gender, ethnic origin, color, economic status, and now adds – sexual orientation. It removed The United Methodist Church’s ban on the ordination of clergy who are “self-avowed practicing homosexuals”. Candidates for ministry are to be eligible by their perceived gifts and potential for effectiveness in the proclamation or teaching of the gospel, the making of disciples, providing pastoral care, or connecting the church to the world.
- Please follow the link for same-sex wedding information:
<https://advocatesc.org/articles/day-10-gc2020> - see section from article - “Pastors can perform—or refuse to perform—gay weddings”

c. Is it true that the language related to adultery has been removed from clergy as chargeable offenses? Single pastors/married clergy can have sex outside of marriage and not violate the expectations per the Book of Discipline? Adultery is no longer a sin per the Book of Discipline?

- <https://www.umnews.org/en/news/united-methodists-remove-same-sex-wedding-ban> - (see Other Actions section) *By a vote of 474 to 206, delegates maintained the chargeable offense of immorality. Delegates did not approve a proposal to add the definition “including, but not limited to, not being celibate in singleness, or not faithful in a marriage”.*
- <https://advocatesc.org/articles/day-10-gc2020> - (see the Social Responsibility Section) *In their qualifications for ordination, clergy are no longer asked to agree to exercise “fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness” but rather now to exercise “social responsibility and faithful sexual responsibility expressed through fidelity, monogamy, commitment, mutual affection and respect, careful and honest communication, mutual consent, and growth in grace and in the knowledge and love of God.*

- <https://www.umc.org/en/content/ask-the-umc-the-umc-really-is-part-2-ending-some-chargeable-offenses> - UMC article on removable of some chargeable offenses
- The Book of Discipline does not state that adultery is not a sin.

d. Is it true that some of our apportionment dollars can be used to promote homosexuality and will be used to form a Center of LGBTQ Museum?

- <https://www.umnews.org/en/news/lgbtq-bans-slowly-being-eliminated> (see changes approved)

Remove a ban on annual conferences from giving United Methodist funds to any "gay caucus group" or using funds to "promote the acceptance of homosexuality." Instead, the provision now says annual conferences should honor the denomination's commitment not to reject lesbian or gay members.

Eliminates the requirement that the General Council on Finance and Administration, the denomination's finance agency, enforce the funding ban. Instead, the provision says the finance agency should ensure that church funds are not used to reject LGBTQ people or limit the church's response to the HIV epidemic.

- <https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/gcah-announces-new-center-for-lgbtq-united-methodist-heritage>

e. Is it true that the UMC is divesting from Israel bonds? Does that mean our denomination is no longer supporting Israel?

A resolution was passed to divest of investments in several countries. (please read)

<https://www.umnews.org/en/news/resolution-opposes-investment-in-israeli-bonds>

f. Won't these philosophical teaching roll down to training our children and youth that we as a church body are not teaching from the Bible, but teaching our children and youth that scripturally it is approved by our denomination for same sex marriage, adultery is not a sin and no parameter around abortion? Are we as a denomination supporting abortion where the baby is healthy and can survive outside the womb? [This is a personal question that everyone will have to discern for themselves.](#)

3. What changed with abortion?

These links show the previous wording (2017-2020) and revised 2024 wording around abortion.

- "Social Principles of the UMC 2017-2020"; Page 30 - Section K
https://www.cokesbury.com/samples/pdf/97815_803-548-010201835773.pdf
- "United Methodist Revised Social Principles", The General Conference 2024; Page 28 - Section K
<https://www.umcjustice.org/documents/124>

SC CONFERENCE

1. How many churches are left in the SC Conf.? [715](#)
2. How many ministers were ordained in SC in 2023 & 2024? [2024: 16 \(elders, provisional elders, deacons\)](#)
3. How many ministers left the SC Conf for any reason in 2023 & 2024? [2024: 36 retirees; other #'s not available](#)
4. How many SC churches are led by local pastors, retired pastors, lay people, etc in 2024? [Approximately 64% \(2024 Ministerial Appointments\)](#)
5. How many churches from the SC UMC Conference disaffiliated in 2023? [113](#) How many in 2024? [112](#)
6. Is the team aware of any UMC pastors that have left the UMC, even though the church they were assigned to didn't disaffiliate? [We unaware of the UMC providing this information.](#)
7. Do we know of any churches that have disaffiliated in SC? Are we using any of them as a resource? [The team is using many resources including other churches that have been through/are going through this process, information from the UMC Conference Office of Trustees and vetted internet resources to find the most reliable and accurate information.](#)